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Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XIX, Issue No. 61

THURSDAY MARCH 12, 2009

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
Should the
Legislature override
the governor's veto
of the Fiscal Year
2009 budget?

Let your voice be heard!
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INSIDE



New Twist

In a courtroom surprise, it was revealed that Bernard Madoff will plead guilty to securities fraud, perjury and other crimes.

BUSINESS...Page 15



Rampage

A gunman on a terrifying rampage across two southern Alabama counties killed at least nine people.

NATION...Page 16



Busy in Beijing

I achieved one of my life goals recently. I climbed the Great Wall of China.

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'Federalization hearing is postponed indefinitely' **PAGE 6**

House overrides budget veto

New FY 2009 spending plan now in place

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

A previously absent lawmaker showed up. Another changed his vote. That's all it took to finally muster the 14 votes necessary to overturn the governor's veto of the \$156.76 mil-

lion Fiscal Year 2009 budget.

It was the House's second and final attempt to override Gov. Benigno Fitial's veto of the revised budget, 162 days into the current fiscal year. The Senate earlier overrode the veto. With both chambers passing the

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HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, left, picks Finance Secretary Eloy Inos to be his running mate for his re-election bid this November, during a gathering last night at the Seaman's Restaurant in Lower Base.

Fitial and Inos vow 'better governance'

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Finance Secretary Eloy Inos, who is also chairman of the Covenant Party, formally announced yesterday his decision to join Gov. Benigno R. Fitial in seeking another term this November election.

In a private gathering of Cabinet members at Seaman's Restaurant in Lower Base last night, Inos said the Common-

wealth's present economic and financial condition motivated him to run for higher office.

"The most important factor that played a major role in my decision to run is the entire economic and financial situation and I believe I can contribute in many ways in helping address the problems. Hopefully we can get the right solution and financial relief for our people," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

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McPhetres rescinds resignation

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Just two days after submitting her resignation letter to the governor, Agnes McPhetres has rescinded her decision and submitted a new letter to the Board of Regents, canceling her first letter.



McPhetres

Board of Regents chair Charles V. Cepeda yesterday said that McPhetres turned in the "rescinded" version last Monday. The former NMC president resigned Friday, March 6.

Cepeda said the board has yet to act on McPhetres' request to return to the board.

"As of the moment, the board has yet to meet and decide on her letter rescinding her decision. It's up to the board to accept it or not," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

As for McPhetres' current status, Cepeda admitted that he could not consider her a member of the board without the regents first acting on the issue.

"As a chair, I can't say di-
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HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

ROMANTIC GETAWAY

Against a backdrop of clear blue skies and a military prepositioned ship, husband and wife Damian and Rose Spis of San Jose pass the time fishing together on a tiny boat at the Saipan lagoon yesterday noon.

WITH MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE IN MAY

1,802 hotel employees affected, \$1.7M hike in wage costs seen

Hotels may lay off workers, cut work hours

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Hotels may be forced to lay off employees, cut benefits, or reduce work hours as a result of the additional 50-cent increase in minimum wage scheduled in May, and which will cost the industry almost \$1.7 million in added payroll costs annually.

Some 68 percent or 1,802 of the total 2,636 employees of hotels that are members of the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands will be affected by the minimum wage hike.

This means seven of every 10 employees in the hotel industry will get an increase in their hourly wages, forcing hotels to find ways to cushion the im-

pact at a time when the CNMI economy is at its worst with the collapse of the garment industry and low tourist arrivals, coupled with uncertainties brought by federalization and the global economic crunch.

From the current \$4.05 an hour, the CNMI's minimum wage will increase to \$4.55 an

See **HOTELS** on Page 4

Local

Report: Debt settlement vital to CUC recovery

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
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REPORTER

Debt settlement with the Commonwealth Development Authority is a critical factor in the recovery of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp, according to Georgetown Consulting Corp.

In its report to the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission filed March 6, the consulting firm said debt restructuring will help CUC access short- and long-term credit markets that would address its complex problems.

"Resolution is critical to CUC since it will not be able to access short- and long-term credit markets until this matter

is resolved [with CDA]," the report stated, describing the matter as "complicated" that dates back many years.

The Legislature tried to address the issue with the passage of Public Laws 15-12 and 15-44 but these, the consultant said, did not resolve any of CUC's problems.

"The history of this matter is that funds originally provided to CUC by CDA were from a \$140-million direct assistance 'grant' from the federal government. There was no repayment requirement of the CNMI to the federal government in connection to this 'grant,'" the consultant noted, adding that CDA simply acted as a channel for the

CNMI government in the distribution of grant the funds.

Funds were also distributed by CDA to other government agencies without the requirement that they pay principal and interest on the funds.

Public Law 15-12 states "that it is in the best interest of the CNMI to write off in full CUC's loans from CDA in order to promote the stability of CUC and to secure the continuity of public utility services to the people of the CNMI."

Georgetown Consulting said this has not happened. However, it indicated that CUC is willing to resolve the issue.

"CUC has indicated a willingness to resolve this matter

However, CDA has not at this time expressed a willingness to have the PUC serve in a role to adjudicate this matter. In the meantime, the matter remains unresolved and CUC is effectively barred from capital markets," the report said.

Given CUC's urgent need for capital to comply with the requirements of a federal stipulated order, Georgetown Consulting views the matter as one of the most critical issues facing CUC today.

"We believe that CUC is ready to make the policy and business decisions necessary to allow it to execute or renegotiate the proposed settlement

agreement. However, absent reaching a definitive agreement with CDA, this issue continues to stymie CUC's ability to access capital markets," it added.

The consulting firm believes that without such access, CUC's path to financial independence and service to CNMI ratepayers will remain seriously compromised.

Georgetown Consulting found out that a number of factors put CUC in an extraordinarily weak financial and operational position, leaving it in a day-to-day crisis mode. These include lack of resources, in-

house capabilities, or a management team required to directly address all issues.

Utilities operation was specifically affected by grossly inadequate water and wastewater user rates that currently only cover a fraction of the true cost of operation, unprecedented fuel price volatility, tardiness in collection efforts, loss of garment industry customers, and the overall decline in tourism.

Georgetown Consulting said all these factors led to a lack of liquidity that has had a negative impact on the financial and physical conditions of CUC.

Planning gets underway for national marine monument

By **KRISTI EATON**
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REPORTER

A management plan for the Marianas Trench National Marine monument should be completed within the next two years, officials from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service told members of the Legislature yesterday.

Officials from Fish and Wildlife have been on island this week to meet with Gov. Benigno Fitial, as well as other officials within the administration and the Legislature, as the plan for the monument moves forward.

"We envision a very public process, so we will provide information along the way," said Don Palawski, Refuge Manager with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Official scoping meetings should occur in May, he said.

The National Marine Fisheries Service will play a key role in the management plan, he added. The plan will provide for public education programs,

traditional access by indigenous persons, scientific exploration and research, consideration for recreational fishing if it will not detract from the monument, and programs for monitoring and enforcement.

The Secretary of Commerce and the Secretary of the Interior will share responsibilities for managing the national monument.

During the meeting with the lawmakers, Palawski emphasized that the CNMI's input will be very important when determining the level of fishing rights in the areas surrounding the monument, which encompasses the three northernmost Mariana Islands.

As Senate President Pete Reyes said yesterday, opposition to the monument was the first time the governor and the Legislature agreed on something.

But with the final product differing from the initial plans, local officials are satisfied with the outcome, he added.

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Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Statewide Independent Living Council
FY 09' 2nd General Membership Meeting
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PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to I CMC §99 10, the public is advised that the Statewide Independent Living Council will hold its FY 09 2nd General Membership Meeting on Thursday, March 12, 2009 at the Azucena I, Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan at 10:00am-2:00pm. Interested individuals are welcome to attend.

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order/Preliminaries**
 - Review and Adoption of Agenda
 - Review and Adoption of 10/15/08 Minutes
- II. Reports**
 - OVR Director's Report
 - SILC Chairperson Report
- III. Old Business**
 - Follow up on SPIL Amendments
 - Follow up on vacancy Appointments
- IV. New Business**
 - SILC Empowerment & Advocacy Activities
 - Joint State Plan Forums for Saipan, Tinian, & Rota
- V. Announcements**
- VI. Adjournment**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals who wish to attend the meeting but require accommodations such as large print or sign language interpreters, are asked to call 322-6537 (voice) or 322-6449 (TTY). Please contact Magin Ignoef (Council Liaison) two days in advance for necessary arrangements.

/s/ Kaye Christian
SILC Chairperson

Publication of this notice was paid for with federal funds made possible by the United States Department of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS)

Rota casino commission cuts fees, OKs phased-in projects

By **HAIDEE V. EUGENIO**
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REPORTER

To entice businesses during these tough economic times, the Rota Casino Gaming Commission now allows a phased in casino development to meet the required \$25 million investment threshold, and has cut the license application filing fee by 90 percent or from \$100,000 to \$10,000.

The commission also reduced its casino license fee, from a flat rate of \$200,000 a year to a tiered rate of \$150,000 for one year, \$300,000 for three years,

and \$400,000 for five years.

These are among the amendments made by the Rota Casino Gaming Commission to its regulations to cope with the economic slowdown and the challenges facing new developments on Rota.

Diego M. Songao, chairman of the Rota Casino Gaming Commission, said they have worked tirelessly for the past month with a regional gaming expert to identify areas in the commission's rules and regulations that conflict with the current gaming investor environment.

"We feel that the positive changes we have made will now allow Rota to be one of the, if not the most, favorable gaming jurisdictions to invest and operate a casino in," Songao said in a statement.

One of the most significant pro-business changes that the commission made was to allow a casino investor to phase in development to meet the required \$25 million total investment that the Rota Gaming Act requires.

Section 2-2.1 of the RCGC regulations, as amended, provides via a "conditional li-

cense" a 10-year period for investors to meet the total investment requirement of \$25 million, as long as the first phase of development is a minimum of \$5 million.

The investor will also be required to financially demonstrate that future funding will be available for the phased development plan of \$25 million required within the 10-year period.

"This gives investors a lower upfront threshold of investment (\$5 million), so that they have less capital at risk in a global recession environment. At the same time, we provide the time that is necessary for the possible improvement in the overall economic environment," commissioner Abelina T. Mendiola said.

Melchor A. Mendiola, another commissioner, said the overall goal is to create a regulatory

environment that is enticing to developers in a very tight global capital market, but at the same time, strengthening protections for the people of Rota.

For example, licensees will be required to set aside 20 percent of their total purchasing for local businesses on Rota.

Rota casino licensees will also be required to maintain a minimum of 20 percent local resident hires.

"We felt it was necessary that while deregulating and lowering fees for the investor, we, at the same time, ensure that Rota's economy benefits as the people intended in the passage of the Rota Casino Gaming Act," said Justin S. Manglona, secretary of the Rota Casino Gaming Commission.

The commission added a requirement for licensees to con-

duct regular open training for Rota residents, and to waive fees for casino service industry businesses that are based on Rota.

"Overall, we strongly believe that we have made the necessary amendments that are fair to the people of Rota and at the same time acknowledge the difficult economic environment our prospective investors face. The impression we wanted to convey to all investors is that although we are one of the world's newest gaming jurisdictions, we are also one of the most investor friendly," commission vice chair Elphrem S. Taimanao said.

In the CNMI, only Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino operates a five-star casino, although three other investors are now working on developing new casinos on the island.

Six NMI students win in Guam music fest

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
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REPORTER

Six members of the Southern High School Band have been invited to the command performance of the 2nd Tumon Bay Music Festival after winning gold medals earlier this week.

The command performance concludes the competition and gathers the previous days' winners in all the categories for a final show.

The six students from the CNMI bagged gold medals in solo performance and rock and jazz.

Haelin Kim was the top winner in the solo competition after dazzling spectators with her talent and skill using the cello.

Five Manta Ray Band members were honored in the rock band category—Joseph Jang, Vincent Choi, Sang Woo, Yoon Choi, and Chang Kang—collectively known as SSSH Manta Flyerz.

On Saturday, the entire Manta Ray Band will defend its title in the concert category.

According to Lois DeWitt, wife of the group's musical conductor and director Will DeWitt, the Manta Ray Band is having daily rehearsals to prepare for their performance on Saturday.

They are also having band clinics under the direction of famous Japanese band instructor, Miestro.

The following are the initial winners of the 2nd Annual Tu-

mon Music Festival:

■ **Choir category:** Harvest Christian Academy Honor Choir (elementary); Cdr. William C. McCool Middle School Choir (middle school); Harvest Christian Academy High School Choir (high school); and Guam Adventist Academy Hand Bell Choir (hand bell choir open division).

■ **For the popular idiom ensemble:** SSSH Manta Flyerz; Caitlin Lawson-DODEA Guam High School (vocal solo category); SSSH's Haelin Kim (instrumental solo category for cello); Evelyn Quiel of Simon Sanchez High School for piano; and Zhen Yu Su for violin.

Solo performers are scheduled for a repeat performance Friday and Sunday.

Pre-Economic Summit Public Session

**Multipurpose Center
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8:30am - 1:00pm**

The event will be broadcasted through
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- **Potential Industries**
- **Government Regulations**

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Registration is limited.
Deadline for registration is 3:00pm March 18, 2009

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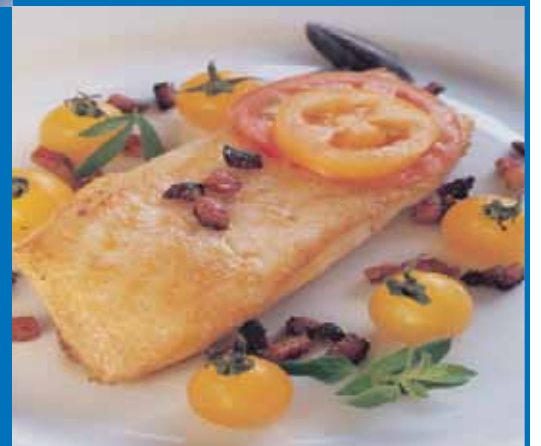


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CNMI Descent: Federalization law violates Covenant

By **HAIDEE V. EUGENIO**
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Descent for Self-Government and Indigenous Rights says the federalization law's direct and immediate injury to the CNMI is not economic hardship but loss of constitutional right.

CNMI Descent supports the lawsuit filed by Gov. Benigno R. Fitial against the federal government.

In a 37-page amicus curiae to the lawsuit filed by the CNMI government against the U.S. government, CNMI Descent said the U.S. government

misapprehends the true nature of the injury that Public Law 110-229 or the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008 inflicts on the CNMI.

"That injury is not primarily economic in character, but rather constitutional, i.e., the violation of the Covenant, which is the constitution of the U.S.-CNMI union," CNMI Descent said through counsels John E. Drury and Robert J. O'Connor.

It said the infringement on, and deprivation of, the CNMI Covenant-guaranteed right of self-government is the immediate and primary injury, not any economic harm that may ultimate-

ly result from that deprivation.

"The injury, in other words, does not consist primarily in the economic hardship that will result from the Act, but rather from the fact that the Act directly and presently removes from the CNMI the power to wield vital tools necessary to prevent that hardship from occurring, or to respond effectively when it does occur," the group said.

CNMI Descent said the degree of intrusion into the internal affairs of the CNMI by Title VII Subtitle A of CNRA exceeds any federal interest served by the Act.

The group said the right to self-government, as provided in the Covenant,

is not satisfied by "consultation with the governor of the Commonwealth" by federal officials in the exercise of total federal discretionary authority.

Title VII Subtitle A of the Resources Act is, therefore, "null, void and un-

lawfully unenforceable with respect to the CNMI," the group said.

"The CNMI's complaint should not be dismissed, and the injunction it seeks should be granted," CNMI Descent said.

RELATED NEWS

■ 'Federalization hearing is postponed indefinitely'

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MCPHETRES

From Page 1

rectly at this moment on her status... because no action has been taken by the board," he said. "We need to wait for the board's decision."

McPhetres had disclosed in her letter to the governor that she's quitting the post due to several issues within the college, mostly pertaining to the college president's management style and operations.

She had earlier cited that she has lost faith and confidence in the capability of the current NMC president, Dr. Carmen Fernandez, to lead the institution, especially in this critical time for its accreditation.

McPhetres was the longest serving president of NMC before becoming a board member. She was appointed by Gov. Benigno R. Fitial to the post and has been in the position for less than a year.

Cepeda described yesterday as "serious" the reasons cited by McPhetres in her resignation letter, which also

indicated an incident where the board allegedly "grilled" her over unfounded accusations that she instigated and attended a meeting of a group of faculty and administrators who are dissatisfied with the president's performance.

Currently, the seven-member board has six members, including McPhetres.

Cepeda declined to comment when asked for the reasons that McPhetres cited in rescinding her resignation.

However, he said the letter did not mention anything about a wish by the governor for her to stay on.

HOUSE

From Page 1

override, House Bill 16-223 officially becomes law.

Fourteen of the 20 members voted yes, the minimum number needed for an override. Reps. Victor Hocog, Oscar Babauta, Joseph Camacho, and Stanley Torres voted against it.

Raymond Palacios and Justo Quitugua, who both voted no on the last attempt to override, were absent during yesterday's session.

House Speaker Arnold Palacios said he would not use the word happy for the outcome, but said the House of Representatives completed what it needed to.

"I think in the end we've done our job," he said.

In December, Fitial vetoed the Legislature's first budget of \$165 million, citing an \$8 million drop in projected local revenue. The House failed to override that veto.

After the first veto, Fitial slashed government spending across the board by 5.5 percent. Using the 5.5 percent cut as a guide, the House introduced a new budget of \$156.76 million, with \$148 million from local revenue. The budget does not include austerity measures like unpaid holidays, something Fitial called for when he vetoed the first budget and was the reason he gave for vetoing the second budget last month.

Last week the House failed to override the veto, with only 12 members voting yes. Yesterday's vote was the House's last chance for an override.

"We exhausted our chance," Palacios said. "I'm relieved. We've gotten a budget out of the 16th Legislature, albeit not everyone is happy about it, but we have a spending plan."

Reps. David Apatang and Edwin Aldan cast the two votes necessary to pass the override. Apatang was absent during last week's attempt, while Aldan voted against the override.

Aldan, who was not present when the House initially passed the \$156.76

HOW THEY VOTED

YES

Speaker Arnold I. Palacios, R-Saipan
Vice Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero, R-Saipan
Rep. Diego T. Benavente, R-Saipan
Rep. Francisco S. Dela Cruz, Covenant-Saipan
Rep. Heinz S. Hofschneider, R-Saipan
Rep. Joseph C. Reyes, R-Saipan
Rep. Tina M. Sablan, Ind-Saipan
Rep. Edward T. Salas, R-Saipan
Rep. Rosemond B. Santos, R-Saipan
Rep. Ramon A. Tebuteb, R-Saipan
Rep. Ralph DLG Torres, R-Saipan
Rep. Ray N. Yumul, R-Saipan
Rep. Edwin P. Aldan, Covenant-Tinian*
Rep. David M. Apatang, Ind-Saipan*

NO

Floor Leader Joseph N. Camacho, R-Saipan
Rep. Oscar M. Babauta, Covenant-Saipan
Rep. Victor B. Hocog, Ind-Rota
Rep. Stanley T. Torres, R-Saipan

ABSENT

Rep. Raymond D. Palacios, Covenant-Saipan*
Rep. Justo S. Quitugua, D-Saipan*

**Aldan changed his vote, while Apatang was absent during the last attempt to override. Both Raymond Palacios and Quitugua voted no during the last override try.*

million budget, said that after reviewing the bill over the weekend he decided to change his position.

"Like other members, I was concerned about the need to have some kind of spending guideline," he said.

'Very difficult situation'

Charles Reyes, press secretary for the Governor's Office, said the new law presents a difficult situation. Finance Secretary Eloy Inos has a number of concerns, which will be discussed in more detail at a press conference today, the press secretary said.

"It's a pretty grave situation for the reasons we said before," he said, noting there are no austerity provisions in the law.

The specific breakdowns for each department have not been made clear,

he said.

"They expect the Executive Branch to make those decisions. Obviously, those are going to be some very painful decisions to cut costs," he added.

There are several reasons why the House might have gone ahead and passed the override, Reyes said.

"Maybe they don't believe the financial projections," he said. "Some of them may be skeptical of our assertions and our information of the financial information. They may think that's not really the case, and that's not true. We have good numbers here to rely on that they should appreciate."

Also, he said, the lawmakers may not fully appreciate what the consequences and implications are of passing the budget.

However, he said a more cynical possibility for the override might be political.

"From their standpoint, they may want to put the governor in a very difficult situation, where he will have to make cuts that a budget override calls for, which is unfortunate," the press secretary said.

Reyes said there has been a lack of trust among some lawmakers throughout the budget process, and this being an election year has made it more difficult.

Rep. Ray Yumul, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, said he would now sit down with the Office of Personnel Management and Inos to discuss how the new law will affect full time employees. With no budget in place, the government had been on continuing resolution. The decreased budget will mean there will be fewer full time employee positions funded. When asked if employees will get laid off, Yumul said he does not know.

Esther Fleming, the governor's special assistant for administration, who had been present during past override attempts, said yesterday that she would not comment until she met with Fitial and Inos. But she did say "drastic" changes would need to occur with the new law in place.

FITAL

From Page 1

Inos has been in government service for over 35 years. He served as NMI Finance secretary thrice and was a long time finance executive during the Trust Territory government. This is his first stab at an elective post.

Inos, who has worked with Fitial for many years, has this to say about their rapport: "I find working with the governor to be very pleasant. We work well. We understand the problem and we believe we're the team that would bring us out of this financial mess."

The Covenant party chairman admitted that the "idea" has been in the works for quite some time and required a lot of consultations with families and friends.

He conceded that his decision was "difficult" for him as many of his close friends are also running for lieutenant governor for other parties.

"It's difficult enough that I have to do this...but I believe I would be serving the public better if I were to move on and help this governor in this capacity," he said.

When asked what makes their tandem better, Inos said: "I think we bring a lot to the table. I say this because I firmly believe that with my current involvement in the Fitial administration and seeing him do many things that he needs to do...I am convinced that this team can keep us afloat and get us out of this economic situation."

Prepared to face detractors and critics, Inos said the bad state of the economy in the CNMI cannot be blamed on the present administration as these are the results of the global meltdown and the national crisis affecting everyone.

"What we're offering are commit-

ment and skills...to explore and take every drop of opportunity that comes around. We believe we can offer much relief to the people," he said, adding that the islands' situation would have been worse if the Fitial administration hadn't stepped in to address people's needs.

'Better administration, better governance'

Gov. Fitial last night admitted that the decision to select Inos was "long time made."

"The decision was made a long time ago...since the very moment we began reviewing the names of potential running mates," he told *Saipan Tribune*, adding that he had nobody else in mind.

He's counting on the capability of Inos to help the government address the current economic situation.

"We have problems with our economy and finance...and we are both finance people. We will deliver for the people," he said.

Fitial said the team's slogan is still "Better Times."

"Better times means better administration...better governance. It's not only for a better economy. This is the administration that has balanced the budget—expenditure versus resources—for three consecutive years. I should be proud of this...but I am not because I know this is my job," he said.

Like Inos, the governor is ready to face detractors of his administration. He acknowledged some of the "unpopular decisions" he has made.

"Unpopular decisions sometimes must be made and I for one will never hesitate to do the right thing because I believe people should do what is right and as a leader I believe I am doing the right thing. That's why a lot of my decisions are unpopular, but they are right," Fitial added.

ployees whose wages will be adjusted in just a few weeks to meet the federal wage law.

Lynn Knight, chairperson of HANMI, said while 68 percent of the employees might be glad to have an increase in their salaries which is understandable given the rising costs of living, this will be a huge burden to pay for all at one time and will put hotel businesses in jeopardy unless they find other ways to save money.

To reduce expenses in other areas, hotels are now looking at laying off employees, reducing work hours from 36 to 32 hours per week, reducing employee benefits, or charging employees for benefits, including meals, housing and insurance.

Others look to energy saving measures, increasing prices to customers, reducing pay to exempt staff by 10 percent, freeze hiring, and putting on hold capital improvements.

"Clearly, we are not taking in more profits this year as the rate of occupancy is just not at an average profitable level yet. Increases in business revenue are not available to the hotels without more air service and we're not seeing that. In fact, the opposite is true with the reduction in some schedules from Japan and additional losses of business we expect with federalization and the loss of Russian and Chinese tourist markets," said Knight.

HOTELS

From Page 1

hour in May.

Public Law 110-28 requires the yearly increase in the minimum wage in the CNMI until it reaches the federal minimum wage level of \$7.25 an hour.

"Any severe change like a minimum wage increase will hurt our business but we have to keep the doors open," said Pete Igitol, director of Hafa Ada Beach Hotel in Garapan.

To cope with the additional salary expense, the management will have to decide whether to reduce work hours or lay off employees.

"I'm sure hotel principals would rather see reduced work hours than lay off people," Igitol told *Saipan Tribune*.

Hiroki Sugie, general manager of Aqua Resort Club, yesterday said they will be increasing the salaries of hotel employees as required by law, but to cushion the impact of the additional cost, they may also reduce work hours.

Hafa Adai Beach Hotel and Aqua Resort Club are among the 14 HANMI members that reported a total of 1,802 hotel employees that will be affected by the minimum wage increase in May. The hotel industry employs a total of 2,636 individuals.

Each hotel reported 11 to 398 em-

Kilili backs national youth service legislation

WASHINGTON, D.C.—CNMI Delegate Gregorio “Kilili” C. Sablan has signed on to co-sponsor the Generations Invigorating Volunteerism and Education, or GIVE, Act.

The Act, co-sponsored by several prominent members of Congress including Rep. George Miller of California, chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor, focuses on creating opportunities for young people to serve their

communities and boosts educational and vocational training opportunities.

“It’s very important that young people in the Northern Marianas and everywhere in our country have more opportunities to serve their communities and get real-world work experience,” said Sablan. “The GIVE Act would do just that and I will be working very hard along with the rest of the Democratic party to ensure passage.”

National service is a key part of the agenda of President Barack Obama and the GIVE Act is being fast-tracked through Congress. The bill is expected to be marked up by Miller’s committee this week, then head to the floor of the House for

consideration next week.

Among the provisions of the bill is an expansion of the AmeriCorps program from 75,000 members to 250,000. Education awards for AmeriCorps participants have also been increased, helping participants continue on to higher education without the

burden of student loans.

The bill creates a new Summer of Service program to engage middle and high school students in volunteer activities in their own communities in return for an educational award of \$500. For high schoolers and out-of-school youth, Youth Engagement Zones can help encourage volunteers in high-need, low-income communities.

Increasing volunteer opportunities for high-need communities is a major theme of the bill, with expanded opportunities for disadvantaged youth and those with disabilities, as well as four new service corps that help address key needs in low-income communities: a Clean Energy Corps, an Education Corps, a Health Futures Corps, and a Veterans Service Corps. (PR)

NMC consultant checked 7 applicants

BY MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The consultant group hired by the Northern Marianas College to do background checks on potential employees said yesterday that a total of seven individuals have so far been checked by the agency, majority of them from the East Coast.

Clyde Norita of Jural Group said the company entered into an “open contract” agreement with the college, in which they are called only for specific background check assignments.

Norita said he doesn’t own the company but is a part of the corporation.

“The Jural Group is a corporation and the contract is not with me...but with the corporation. I can say that we’re charging NMC the same rate we charge everybody for our services, which is \$65 per hour,” he told *Saipan Tribune*.

He disclosed that the “open contract” was signed in November.

So far, the group has completed work on seven individuals, Norita said, with one from Micronesia and the rest from the East Coast.

Norita said the group averaged

four hours to check specific individual through e-mails and telephone conversations.

Majority of the completed checks were for potential instructors for the college.

“We’ve already done seven background checks on potential employees of NMC. Although we do some local checking, it is only when NMC asks for it on a case-to-case basis,” he said.

Norita described his work with NMC as “not full time work.”

His investigation work begins with getting the files from NMC and checking to see whether there are discrepancies in the records the applicants provide the college.

However, Norita said they are not entitled to make a recommendation that will influence the selection of candidates.

“When NMC intends to hire somebody, they would call us and we will pick up the file. Whatever discrepancies we found on their records, we submit it to the college,” he said.

Norita said he doesn’t know if any of these seven individuals were hired by the college.

“We don’t get involved in the selection process or recommend anybody for a position,” he added.

Broadcast License Assignment

On February 13, 2009 an application was filed with the FCC to assign the license of stations KCNM(AM), 1080 KHz, Saipan, KCNM-FM, 101.1 MHz, Garapan-Saipan and KZMI(FM), 103.9 MHz, Garapan-Saipan from Inter-Island Communications, Inc to Choice Broadcasting Company, LLC.

The officers, directors and owners of the assignor are Edward H. Poppe, Frances W. Poppe, Edward H. Poppe III, Michelle Aguon, Matthew J. Poppe and Cheryl Kelly.

The managers and members of the assignee are Richard C. Yu, Jeselyn T. Yu and Robert F. Kelley, Jr.

A copy of the application, amendments and related materials are on file for public inspection at Inter-Island Communications Inc. Sablan Bldg San Jose Saipan.



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'Federalization hearing is postponed indefinitely'

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

An oversight hearing on the implementation of the federalization law was postponed until new Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napol-

itano and other administration officials have their feet fully on the ground, a congressional source said.

The hearing on Public Law 110-229 was scheduled for Tuesday in Washington D.C. A new date has not been scheduled.

Once the Obama administration has been in place longer they will be able to speak more authoritatively on the CNMI transition, said the source, who asked not to be identified because he was not authorized to speak for DHS.

Charles Reyes, press secretary for the Governor's Office, said Gov. Benigno Fitial asked for the postponement because he wanted to focus on the CNMI's stimulus grant issues. The governor had also just returned from a trip to the nation's

capital and needed more time, Reyes added.

Fitial, CNMI Delegate Gregorio "Kilili" Sablan, and the CNMI House of Representatives have asked Napolitano to delay the June 1 federalization start date by 180 days—the

maximum amount of time allowed by law. DHS is expected to make a decision on the request in the next few weeks. Congress must be notified of any decision on a delay 30 days before June 1.

A representative from the Department of Homeland Security could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Torres to Bordallo: Support subsea mining for NMI

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Rep. Ralph DLG. Torres has asked Guam Delegate Madeleine Bordallo to support the CNMI's wish to benefit from any subsea mineral extractions outside the 3-mile exclusive economic zone, which the Commonwealth will have a control over once a bill

pending in U.S. Congress becomes law.

Torres, chairman of the House Health, Education and Welfare Committee, said although there are no mining activities now, there are interests for commercial mining in the CNMI by Neptune Minerals and other groups.

He said present technological advancement in mining systems

and the competitiveness of subsea minerals stimulated interests in commercial mining.

"Nautilus Minerals had been given extraction permits by Papua New Guinea at the Solwara fields within PNG EEZ. Therefore, pertinent section of the Outer Continental Shelf Act needs to be amended to allow mining in the Northern Marianas and for our govern-

ment to benefit from these enterprises," Torres added.

This is part of Torres' March 5 letter to Bordallo, chairperson of the Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, in support of H.R. 934, which he said embodies the CNMI's aspiration to have control of its own land.

Delegate Gregorio "Kilili" C. Sablan introduced H.R. 934, which conveys to the CNMI

the submerged lands surrounding each of the Northern Mariana Islands out to 3 miles from the coastline.

The U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources will meet Wednesday in open markup session to consider bills that include Sablan's H.R. 934.

If passed into law, the bill will give the CNMI the same benefits from its submerged lands as Guam, the Virgin Islands and

American Samoa have.

On March 4, the CNMI House of Representatives passed House Joint Resolution 16-24 supporting Sablan's H.R. 934.

In 2005, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit ruled that the CNMI did not own the submerged lands. The ruling angered many people in the Marianas, who believed the court was wrong.

Students watch lawmaking process

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Instead of sitting in class and learning about the lawmaking process, 20 students from Ladera International School of Saipan experienced it firsthand yesterday.

The students in grades 8th through 11th attended the House of Representatives session, where, among other things, the members voted to override the governor's veto of the fiscal year 2009 budget—a controversial topic that has been going on for months.

Christina Carella, an 8th grader, said watching the passage of the override and, in turn, the budget becoming law was interesting. She said they discussed the issue in class before attending the session.

Although students can study the lawmaking process in civics class, seeing it firsthand adds to the educational process, said Ariel St. Clair, an 11th grader.

"I felt like I was kind of a part of it," she said, adding that it brought a new understanding of the issue.

This is the first time students from Ladera have attended a session, said Richard Waldo, who teaches American and World history and psychology at the school.

"It's good for students to know how the local government works, not just read about it in books," he said.

The students need to realize their legislators are very accessible, Waldo, who spoke and shook hands with many of the representatives, said.

There are few places where a lawmaker will know a constituent by name, he said.

"I'm from California and I never met [Gov.] Arnold Schwarzenegger," he said.

After listening in on the session for a few hours, the students headed to the American Memorial Park museum.

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SAIPAN SEAPORT PROJECT NO. CPA-SS-001-09 REQUEST FOR INTEREST

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is requesting the attendance of all interested parties for certain renovation and replacement works to the seawater fire fighting piping system, to the CPA Seaport Administration Building, Ferry Ticket Booth and the pier area on the Island of Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

A Pre-Proposal Conference will be held for this project at **3:00 p.m. on Monday, March 16, 2009 in Saipan at the CPA Port of Saipan Conference Room** on the second floor. Prospective proposers are required to attend. All questions prior to the pre-proposal conference must be submitted in writing to Mr. Efrain F. Camacho, PE, CPA's Executive Director, faxed to (670) 234-5962 or emailed to cpa.admin@pticom.com. A scope of work will then be designed to form the basis for all proposals.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

/s/ MR. EFRAIN F. CAMACHO, P.E.
Executive Director/Contracting Officer

Date: March 9, 2009

Special fare is round trip per person. Applicable Routing: Saipan to Honolulu via Guam-Honolulu NON-STOP SERVICE ONLY. Travel via Japan: NOT PERMITTED. Instant Ticketing: Tickets must be issued 1 DAY AFTER booking but no later than March 31, 2009. Travel Dates: Travel outbound starting immediately to May 31, 2009. Day of Week Travel: SATURDAY is NOT PERMITTED. Stopover: \$100 per stop (maximum 2 stops). Open Jaw: NOT PERMITTED; Open Return: NOT PERMITTED. Minimum stay: 7 days. Maximum stay: Low season - 3 months; High season - 3 months. Cancellation: Tickets are NON-REFUNDABLE. Child & Senior Discount: NONE. Changes: Anytime - \$250.00; fee applies to change in date only. International taxes and fees of up to a maximum of \$70 apply for the Continental Airlines roundtrip ticket. Tickets are non-refundable. Unused tickets not changed prior to originally scheduled flights have no value and cannot be exchanged. Additional taxes/fees: Prices do not include passenger facility charges of up to \$18 and September 11 Security Fee of \$10 depending on the routing. Seats are limited and may not be available. Fares are subject to change. Other restrictions may apply.

Mexican buffet lunch now within your reach

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR

If it's affordable eat-all-you-can authentic Mexican food you want, then look no further than Tijuana Mexican Cuisine along Beach Road in Lower Garapan.

At only \$8.95 per head, customers of Tijuana Mexican Cuisine can savor seven authentic south-of-the-border entrees from Monday to Friday, according to president and general manager Awie Usudan.

Usudan, who used to be the head waiter of one of Saipan's premiere hotels, said depending on the day of the week Tijuana Mexican Cuisine lays out a lunch buffet lineup that includes all-time favorites like tacos, quesadillas, burritos, chimichangas, and tostados.

He said his restaurant's lunch buffet also serves Tijuana Mexican Cuisine's special courses like the sumptuous Tatomado Pork Special, the intriguing Tijuana Seafood Platter, and the refreshing Mahi-Mahi Vera-

cruz-style Fish.

On the side are nachos and chips and what Mexican meal is complete without staples like Mexican rice and red-eye beans, which the restaurant alternates every other day.

The lunch buffet starts at 11am and ends at 2pm. It comes with bottomless iced tea.

Tijuana Mexican Cuisine took over the operation of Tijuana Mexican Grill and is located at the ground floor of Saipan Gold Beach Hotel.

Usudan said his company opened their new restaurant this January and began offering the lunch buffet earlier this month.

He said he is banking on the growing popularity of Mexican cuisine on the island, as local tastes seem to lean toward spicy food.

With diners becoming more health conscious these days, Usudan added that Mexican food—with its heavy reliance on fresh vegetables—is always a great option for people looking to lose weight.

Usudan said he is also unperturbed by the economic downturn the island is currently experiencing as he is confident that as long as you serve great food and treat customers the right way, your business will thrive.

Tijuana Mexican Cuisine can sit as much as 60 guests and also has a couple of tables outside for customers wanting to dine *al fresco*.

For reservations and for more information about Tijuana Mexican Cuisine and its lunch buffet, call 235-5504 ext. 125 or 287-7097 or e-mail tijuana-mexicuisine@yahoo.com.

MARK RABAGO

Tijuana Mexican Cuisine opened this past January and began offering its \$8.95 lunch buffet earlier this month.



The restaurant's president and general manager Awie Usudan poses with staff Nellie Tawney at the buffet table.



Northern Marianas College

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Special Board Meeting

Board of Regents Conference Room,
NMC Saipan Campus
Friday, March 13, 2009
10:30am

AGENDA

I. Preliminary Matters

A. Roll Call

II. New Business

A. Board member resignation

III. Executive Session

(At any time during the scheduled meeting the Board of Regents may be required to enter into executive session to discuss matters deemed privileged and confidential)

IV. Adjournment

/s/ Charles V. Cepeda
Chairperson, Board of Regents

March 11, 2009
Date

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Female minor sexually assaulted in Dandan

A female minor was sexually assaulted last Saturday in Dandan and police are now hunting for the perpetrator.

In a report issued yesterday, the Department of Public Safety said police officers responded to a call at 6:04am on March 7, 2009, about a sexual assault incident in Dandan. Police confirmed that a female juvenile was involved. The victim was treated at the Commonwealth Health Center.

Detectives are still working on the case at this time.

DPS needs the help of the community in locating the perpetrator of this crime. If they have any information about this case, they

may call the Criminal Investigation Division at 664-9100/ 9047/ 9050 or Crime Stoppers.

Anyone having information

about this crime may call the NMI Crime Stoppers Hotline at 234-7272. All calls are kept anonymous, no caller ID

is used and a reward of up to \$1,000 is given for any information leading to an arrest. *(Saipan Tribune)*

Police rescue two men in distressed vessel

Two men who had gone out to the Saipan lagoon to go bottom fishing and trolling were rescued by police yesterday after the engine on their boat unexpectedly died.

In a report issued yesterday, the Department of Public Safety identified the two as Jose R. Sablan, 55, the boat's operator; and crew member Isidro R. Sablan.

The report states that DPS received a call from the Emergency Management Office around 7:41am about a distressed vessel located about 2 to 3 miles west of Managaha Island.

DPS Boating Safety and the Commonwealth Ports Authority Ports Police launched the DPS res-

cue boat, *Zodiac III*, and responded to the distress call. Police officers eventually located the distressed boat and towed it back to the Smiling Cove Marina. The operator and crew member were found to be in good condition. The vessel was inspected and Boating Safety officers found no violations.

Police learned that the operator and crew member left the Fishing Base dock and headed north toward Managaha to go bottom fishing and trolling. When they reached north of Managaha, the boat engine died. The operator attempted to repair it but was unsuccessful; that was when EMO was called.

The distressed vessel was described as a 17-foot white and red fiberglass vessel. *(Saipan Tribune)*



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Chacha Ocean View open house today

The Chacha Ocean View Jr. High School will be having an open house today, March 12, 2009, from 4pm to 6pm, to distribute 3rd Quarter student mid-progress reports. Should

you have any questions and/or comments, call 237-3921 or 664-4100. *(PR)*

Poetry competition today

The Northern Mariana Islands Council for the Humanities is inviting the public to the 6th An-

nual Valentine Sengebau Poetry Competition at the American Memorial Park Visitors Center Theater today, March 12, at 6:30pm. Students from junior high and high schools on Saipan, Rota, and Tinian will be competing for cash prizes

and trophies. The Sengebau Poetry Competition is sponsored annually by the NMI Council for the Humanities. For more information, contact Council staff at 235-4785 or visit the Council's website at www.nmi-humanities.org. *(PR)*

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Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

MARCH 12, 1999

FAS bill gets backing

Thousands of citizens from the Freely Associated States eat up a huge chunk of the government medical assistance program and incur millions of dollars in expenditures from public schools in the Northern Marianas amid shrinking financial grants from Washington, officials said. The situation has been compounded by continuous plunge in government revenues that has forced drastic cost-cutting measures implemented by the Tenorio administration over the past few months to meet its various financial obligations. This is the contention of the Department of Public Health and the Public School System which have joined other government agencies to express support on a proposed legislation seeking to restrict the stay of Micronesians on the island ahead of a scheduled public hearing on Monday.

MVA keeps bullish outlook on tourism

Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Perry John Tenorio yesterday assured travel professionals and media representatives from Japan that the Northern Marianas is a safe destination for tourists as CNMI officials continue to create and maintain better facilities to ensure that guests enjoy their stay on the island. Although the CNMI has been affected by the ongoing crisis in the Asian region, MVA believes that the future of tourism in the commonwealth remains bright. Only three hours away from Japan, the island will remain an attractive destination for Japanese travelers because of its tropical climate and crystal clear waters, Tenorio said.

MARCH 12, 2001

CUC cuts power in govt offices

Power and water services in several government offices on Rota and Tinian have been ordered disconnected today due to the Administration's failure to reach an agreement with the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation. CUC had hoped to collect past due utility bills or at least reach an agreement with the CNMI government that would guarantee meaningful monthly payments. The utility corporation even went as far as delaying disconnection of utility services on Rota and Tinian government offices to give the Administration enough time to settle its delinquent account. Disconnection of government accounts on Rota and Tinian were originally scheduled for March 7, but CUC allowed a 24-hour delay, hoping to reach an agreement with the government. The 24-hour reprieve expired sans the benefit of an agreement.

Investment scam woman charged with theft

Suspected savings scam perpetrator Mei-Yen Ying appeared for a bail hearing Friday in connection with complaints that she conned over 100 Chinese garment workers of their hard-earned savings amounting to some \$700,000. Police Commissioner Charles W. Ingram Jr. deployed extra police presence within the Susupe courthouse to prevent enraged victims to the savings fraud from possibly laying a hand on the suspect. But the scores of Chinese nationals who trooped to the courts to witness the local judicial system try to bring justice to their clamors surprisingly followed the legal proceeding with patience.

MARCH 12, 2002

Aliens mob asylum forms

A mad scramble among aliens—mostly Chinese and Bangladeshi—broke out at an American Memorial Park meeting Sunday night, as they struggled for possession of limited asylum application forms that may be their key to permanent residency in the "Land of Milk and Honey" and a possible American citizenship. "When I came, I was told by an observer that there was like a mad rush to the stage, and they grabbed the applications," said lawyer Joseph Aldan Arriola, who was a guest at the gathering. "One observer said there were 50 applications, and they were all gone."

Chamber urges Babauta to hire lobbyist

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce is urging the Babauta administration to follow in the footsteps of its predecessors and retain the services of Washington lobbyists who could help the CNMI protect its interests in Washington D.C. In a letter addressed to Gov. Juan N. Babauta, Chamber president Richard A. Pierce said that, although the Murkowski bill has been removed from the Senate calendar, thus removing imminent threats of a federal takeover, a similar bill may be introduced through the Senate Judiciary Committee, where immigration matters rest. "The revival of a similar bill in Sen. Ted Kennedy's committee could threaten the CNMI anew from a different angle. Holds there would not be as easily attained and this could end up another real threat to the CNMI's immigration authority," said Pierce.



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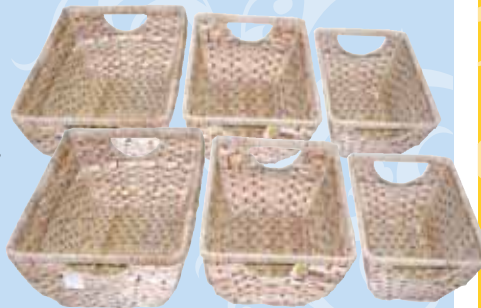
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Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XIX, Issue No. 61Published daily at 2/F CIC Centre,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950Lynn A. Knight PUBLISHER
Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
Mark Rabago ASSISTANT EDITOR

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Stem cell questions

President Obama did the right thing this week when he reversed President George W. Bush's limitations on federal funding for embryonic stem cell research. The potential for cures and treatments of debilitating diseases with these versatile cells is enormous. But this type of experimentation is thick with ethical and moral questions, many of which Mr. Obama put off answering.

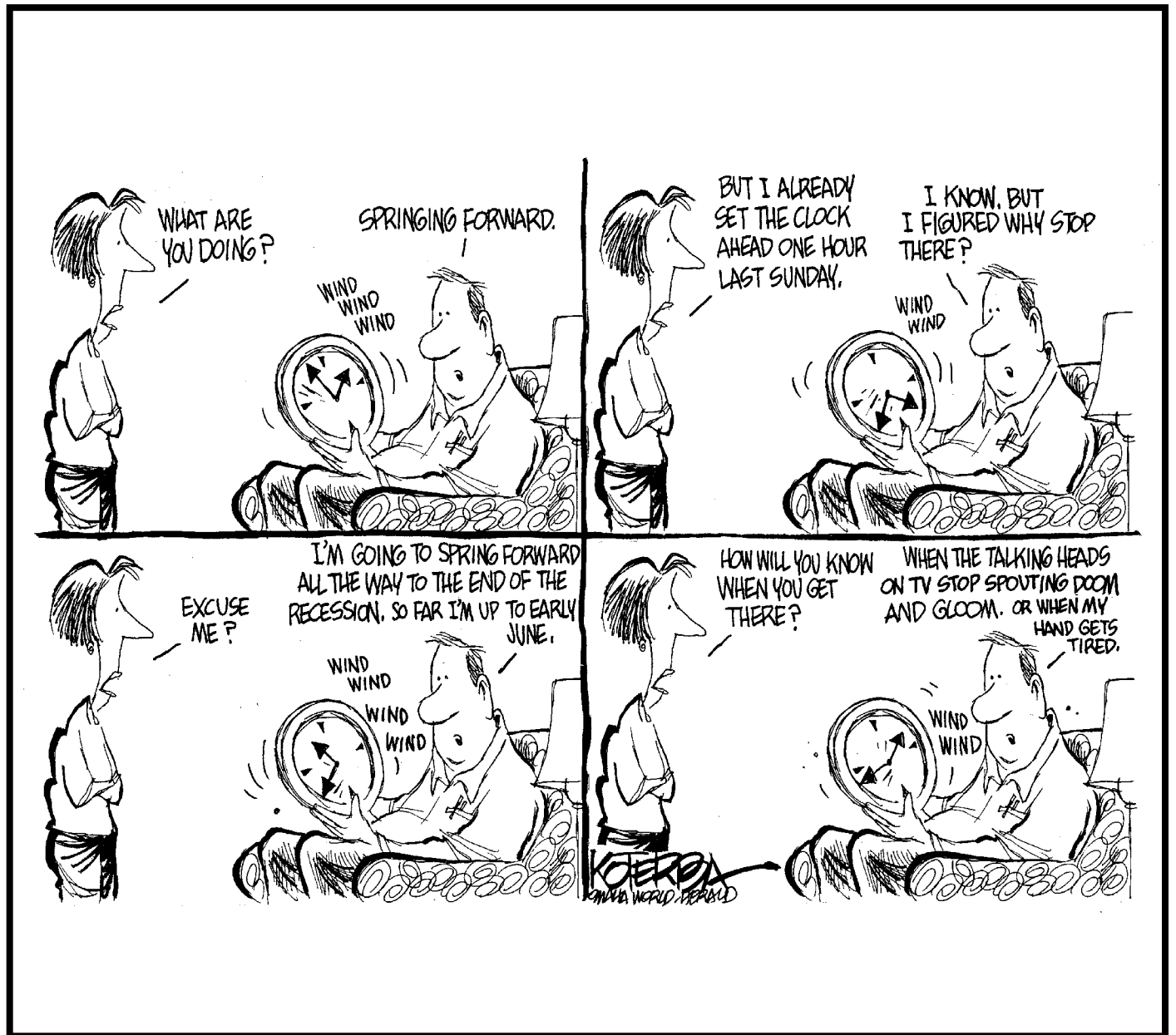
"We will develop strict guidelines, which we will rigorously enforce, because we cannot ever tolerate misuse or abuse," the president said this week at the White House. But he offered little indication of where he would draw those lines. In effect since August 2001, Mr. Bush's limits were offered as a compromise between the needs of scientists and the moral and ethical convictions of those troubled by the stem cell extraction process that destroys the embryos. Mr. Bush permitted federal funding of experimentation, but only on stem cell lines that existed at the time of his announcement. In practice, those 21 viable stem cell lines proved too few, and many scientists said the restrictions were holding back research. The breakthrough in 2007 that made human skin cells function like embryonic stem cells has great potential. But there are still questions about the efficacy of that approach. Mr. Obama says he wants all types of experimentation in this arena to be done "responsibly."

Mr. Obama will allow federal funding to be used for stem cell research on lines derived from embryos since 2001 and into the future. He has directed the National Institutes of Health to devise within 120 days the guidelines that will regulate how this research is conducted. But will research be performed only on stem cell lines grown from the thousands of frozen embryos in fertility clinics that have been slated for destruction? Mr. Obama didn't say. The 1995 legislation known as the Dickey-Wicker Amendment bans federal money from being used to create or destroy human embryos for research, but not research on stem cells from such embryos once they have been created.

Aside from saying, "As a person of faith, I believe we are called to care for each other and work to ease human suffering," the president has not given a hint as to where he stands on some thorny questions. Should Dickey-Wicker be repealed? He leaves it up to Congress to decide that. Where does he stand on growing human embryos for experimentation in general and using them for stem cells in particular? It's unclear.

The White House said that Mr. Obama doesn't want to prejudge the NIH guidelines but that this will not be the last we'll hear from Mr. Obama on this subject. We hope not. Some of these ethical questions need to be dealt with in the political arena, and not just by scientists.

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Sell well

"One of the most important things I learned early on was to ask a lot of questions, appropriate questions about a customer's business, listen very carefully and then come back and make a positive recommendation." —Bill Wilkes, FedEx Hall of Fame account executive

I sent 16 students into the business community to make secret shopper visits to 11 local businesses. Their mission was to evaluate each business using 17 criteria that measures sales success, and then give a letter grade to each business based on their overall experience. When the scores were tallied, there was one A-plus business, 5 As, 4 Bs, 3 Cs, 3 Ds, and no business earned an F grade. How would your business compare if secret shoppers visited your store?

One of the nice things about living on Saipan as a consumer is that there is very low pressure to buy anything. In fact, you can enter practically any retail store, wander around leisurely, and usually not have one sales rep ask if you need assistance. Now that may be good news if you are a shopper, but it spells disaster if you are a business owner wanting to improve sales—and every business owner should be interested in greater sales.

Here is a simple strategy that can be used by every one of your staff that comes in contact with a prospect. You don't even need to be a sales rep to use it, and if you follow the steps you will notice an increase in sales. To make it even easier, all you have to do is think of the acronym "SALES" to remember these five "common sense" steps to better serve your customers. SALES stands for: Small talk; Ask questions; Listen actively; Emphasize benefits; and Suggest a solution. Let's take a closer look at each step so you can learn how to use them on a regular basis.

Small talk. What do you say or do to make a prospect feel comfortable and build rapport with them?

By engaging in small talk you not only make the prospect feel more comfortable, but you establish rapport. Find things that you have in common. Discuss hobbies, interests, find out where they're from or what they like to do. Ask about their family, where they went to school, and where they work. People like people like them.

Ask questions. What are the specific questions you should ask to uncover the needs and wants of your prospects?

Questions are the tools of a good salesperson, and good questions will help you discover the hidden needs and wants of your prospect. Learn to ask more open questions. It will cause the prospect to think about an answer and give you more details. Closed questions can be

By RIK and JANEL VILLEGAS
Special to the Saipan Tribune

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answered with "yes" or "no" or a few words. Instead of asking the closed question, "May I help you?" ask, "How may I help you?" or "What can I help you find?"

Listen actively. How can you become a better listener so that your prospect feels like you understand their needs and wants?

Everyone hears, but few people really listen. Listening is a hidden art that has few practitioners. Here are some things to help you focus on what the prospect tells you. Watch their body language. People will tell you one thing, but their body language may give another message. Show interest in what they have to say. Rephrase a comment to make sure you understand it or to get better clarification. Eliminate your own distractions that would cause you to not stay focused on what your prospect is saying.

Emphasize benefits. How can you translate your product features into benefits that the customer will want?

Your products have tangible features, but your prospect is looking for the benefit that a feature will offer them. Essentially, people will buy your product because it helps them alleviate a discomfort or it offers a solution to a challenge they're experiencing. The greater the benefit your product offers, the more likely they will want to buy it. Demonstrate how it will benefit them and if you get them to try it, they will buy it.

Suggest appropriate solutions. How can you position yourself as an expert so prospects value your recommendations?

People are really silently begging to be led. They want someone to help them find a solution to their problem, and if you have done the first four steps to sell well, you will be in a position to make a suggestion that they will respect. People like to buy, but they don't like to be sold. By using the SALES method, you effectively help them buy the products that will offer the best solution to their situation. This will turn your prospects into customers, and as you build a stronger relationship, your customers will value your recommendations.

EDITORIAL POLICY

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Fear and loathing in Pakistan

Late last month, the chief of Pakistan's army, Gen. Ashfaq Kayani, made an unpublicized visit to the White House to meet President Barack Obama's new national security adviser, retired Marine Gen. James L. Jones Jr.

The meeting did not go well.

Speaking as one general to another, Jones pressed Kayani for a more aggressive war against Islamic militants in western Pakistan, beginning with the Swat Valley, where jihadists seized power this year. To Jones' frustration, Kayani responded only with vague assurances that he was working on the problem.

The Obama administration is only halfway through its 60-day review of U.S. policy on Afghanistan and Pakistan, but top officials already have come to an important conclusion: Pakistan, not Afghanistan, is now the central front of the war against Islamic extremism. And nuclear-armed Pakistan is in trouble. Islamist extremism is on the rise, and the government and army appear incapable of reversing the tide.

Both Osama bin Laden and Mullah Mohammed Omar, leader of Afghanistan's Taliban, run their operations out of Pakistan. And the country's home-grown Islamic militants, allied with al-Qaida, are extending their rule across more and more territory as the pro-American civilian government seems paralyzed. At the same time, the army is trying to placate both the Americans and the Islamists.

So what will the Obama administration do? Send more aid, for starters. The administration plans to ask Congress for an additional \$1.5 billion each year for at least five years—to bolster a government it mistrusts.

And if aid alone can't do the trick, there are always those Hellfire missiles. The Obama administration has continued, and even escalated, a campaign of covert airstrikes by unmanned aircraft against suspected al-Qaida leaders in Pakistan that was started under his predecessor, President George W. Bush. The architects of the CIA-run airstrike campaign are ebullient about its success. "Al-Qaida is on the ropes," the Bush administration's last terrorism czar, Juan Carlos Zarate, declared last week, coming perilously close to a "Mission Accomplished" moment.

But others disagree. "Al-Qaida is winning," countered Bruce Hoffman, dean of U.S. terrorism scholars. "They're successfully subverting (Pakistan) and consolidating a sanctuary for themselves."

The airstrikes have unquestionably disrupted the terrorist organization and made it less capable of carrying out plots like the Sept. 11 attacks on New York's World Trade Center and the Pentagon. But on the ground, where the missiles have killed civilians as well as terrorists, the strikes have created anger against the United States. And there's evidence that the border strikes are driving militants deeper into Pakistan.

That's why Pakistan's future is so important to the United States: It's becoming the haven for terrorists that U.S. troops invaded Afghanistan to destroy.

In 2001, when bin Laden and Omar slipped across the border into Pakistan, they found shelter among sympathetic Pashtun tribesmen in the mountains. Back then, Pakistan's pro-Taliban Islamists were fragmented, feuding and relatively weak. But in the years that followed, the "Pakistani Taliban" has grown, formed new alliances, battled the Pakistani government's security forces—and cemented its sway over the western tribal areas that have never truly been under government control.

Now branches of the Taliban are asserting power in regions outside the tribal areas, most recently in the Swat Valley, 100 miles northwest of the capital, Islamabad. There, a Taliban faction seized power, forced the army to negotiate a cease-fire and imposed a stricter form of Islamic law.

The United States probably can't expect much help from Pakistan's civilian president, Asif Ali Zardari. Once known as "Mr. Ten Percent" for his reputed commissions on government contracts, the widower of Benazir Bhutto is scrambling to rescue his slumping popularity among the Pakistani electorate. Last week, he insisted that the new leaders in Swat were merely "traditional local clerics." And the Obama administration wasn't impressed with Kayani's assurance last month that he's working on a strategy to reassert government authority in Swat.

"Frankenstein's monster has taken over the lab and is threatening to

By DOYLE MCMANUS

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McManus is a Times columnist. He can be reached at doyle.mcmanus@latimes.com.



move into the kitchen and dining room," a U.S. official told me last week. But the Pakistanis "have not yet decided to kill the monster."

U.S. officials hope that the spread of violence will sway Pakistani public opinion. Many in the country's elite—including Zardari, a thoroughly secular figure who knows he's on the Taliban's hit list just as his wife was—are horrified by the rise of the jihadists. But ordinary Pakistanis are divided, and a U.S.-administered poll last year found 63 percent opposed cooperating with the United States. (The good news: That was down from 71 percent.)

The Bush administration sent more than \$10 billion in military aid to Pakistan in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks, but most of it went to strengthen the Pakistani army's conventional forces aimed at its traditional enemy, India, rather than to counterinsurgency forces on the western frontier. Kayani and his colleagues have renewed their requests for more, including helicopters and drone aircraft. Hard bargaining lies ahead.

But the Obama administration's main thrust will be a major increase in economic aid to build roads, bridges and schools in a desperately poor country, in hopes that such things will help the civilian government win the people's support against the Taliban.

In a year when Obama already is asking for a tax increase, another bank bailout and health-care reform, it will be tough to sell Congress on sending billions more in aid to a country with shaky civilian leaders, balky military leaders and a population largely opposed to cooperating with the United States. But the alternative looks worse.

Reach out to survive hard times

You've got to look out for No. 1. It's a dog-eat-dog world. Everybody's in it for themselves.

These are some of the more charming axioms of American-style capitalism, and during hard financial times, you would expect that they would ring truer than ever.

Think of high unemployment and economic scarcity, and up come images of savage competition, broken marriages, corroded race relations and the scapegoating of immigrants. And if things get worse, we're probably going to see all of this and more.

If that weren't bad enough, studies have found that people who lose their jobs often retreat from friends and acquaintances. Whether it's because they're embarrassed or depressed, they're also less likely to participate in social activities.

Lowered civic engagement. Heightened social tensions. Does all this mean that the recession is tearing society apart at the seams?

Not necessarily.

Social (and professional) networking Web sites like LinkedIn and, to a lesser extent, Facebook, are booming, and their success points to another important social dynamic that occurs in hard times: Reaching out, one way or another, beyond your nearest and dearest is a matter of survival.

As the number of layoffs rose in January, unique visitors to LinkedIn shot up 22 percent, to 7.7 million, from 6.3 million in December. In February, Facebook raised its new-user acquisitions rate

from 450,000 a day to more than 480,000.

So what, you say. Everyone knows these sites promote shallow ties to people you barely know, even if you do call the process "friending." But that's exactly what makes the sites a balm in hard times.

"Weak ties are your windows to the world," says Stanford University sociologist Mark Granovetter, who first wrote about this phenomenon in the early 1970s. "When you're looking for new ideas and new connections, you don't get them from family or close friends. It's the weak ties that connect you to different circles and opportunities."

After all, your close family and friends tend to occupy the same circles you do. It's the casual distant relationship—perhaps the person from college you bumped into the other day—who might open the door to a new direction.

In his classic 1973 study, "The Strength of Weak Ties," Granovetter wrote that of the people he surveyed who had found jobs through contacts, more than 80 percent reported that they saw the contact occasionally (55.6 percent) or rarely (27.8 percent). Chance meetings and mutual friends were often the reason the contact and the job-seeker found each other.

The message is pretty clear: People who have either lost a job or fear losing the one they have (which may encompass all of us) should start buttering up old acquaintances and get with the social-

By GREGORY RODRIGUEZ

Special to the Los Angeles Times

Rodriguez is director of the California Fellows Program at the New America Foundation and author of Mongrels, Bastards, Orphans and Vagabonds: Mexican Immigration and the Future of Race in America. E-mail him at grodriguez@latimescolumnists.com.



networking thing.

Recessions don't fundamentally change existing patterns of affection or disdain. In other words, bad times won't make you feel affection for anyone you didn't like before or dislike someone you once adored. They could accentuate those likes and dislikes, though. A rocky marriage could become rockier. Intergroup tensions could rise. And, by the same token, emotional reliance on loved ones can deepen, and solidarity with the groups you identify with can grow.

In the end, however, it's that girl you sat next to in U.S. history in 11th grade, or that guy who played on your college intramural football team, who's in the best position to change your life.

You know who I'm talking about. Their names are on the tip of your tongue. Get out your yearbook; start Googling.

Thank goodness for acquaintanceship.

Letter to the Editor

Food for thought

A week or so ago, the U.S. Senate approved legislation that would grant the District of Columbia in Washington full representation in the U.S. Congress.

While I will not argue the rights of citizens in the District to some form of representation, this legislation is facially unconstitutional. In other words, pertinent provisions of the U.S. Constitution limits full representation to the 50 states. The District is

decidedly not a state.

The only option would be to return it to the State of Maryland that once owned the capital seat of our country. It's the way to do it if we take the U.S. Constitution seriously. But I doubt that Maryland wants to retrieve the District. There are fundamental constitutional issues, though, that differentiates the District versus that of the State of California.

Now if the U.S. Congress is prepared to ratify it, then all territorial possessions should be included in order to attain inclusion.

needed projects may provide some of relief. However, is the CNMI ready? It is my understanding that projects need to be ready to go for construction, meaning design and bid results are in place and waiting.

Yet, despite all this, I need to think positive, I want to think positive and I *must* think positive!

Efrain F. Camacho
Navy Hill, Saipan

The inclusion of territories would mean representation without taxation. I'd take it anytime though it would be unfair for fellow countrymen who contribute annually to the federal coffers. But I'd like to see whether this measure would gain positive traction as traditional conscience from both chambers give it critical review based on pertinent provisions of the U.S. Constitution.

John S. DelRosario Jr.
As Gonno, Saipan

No actual interviews

I just want everyone to know that the new USCIS office here only helps the federal agency. It is not, at this time, staffed to conduct the actual interview. This means that we will still have to foot the bill for a trip to Guam. At present, applicants can go to Guam and have the interview and biometrics done at the same appointment.

Charles A. George
Chalan Kanoa, Saipan

Think positive!






There are many things that have happened to this little island in recent times that is enough to cause anyone to cry and give up. Last week the House failed to act responsibly in passing a budget. Several months ago, the House did not have the courage to evaluate the case relating to the Lt. Governor. (By the way, everyone is innocent unless otherwise proven in the court of law.)

In addition, the economy continues to spiral down with no sign of relief. We are all hopeful that the economic stimulus plans to fund badly

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
				
Mostly clear. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲ 87° ▼ 76°	▲ 86° ▼ 76°	▲ 85° ▼ 77°	▲ 85° ▼ 76°	▲ 86° ▼ 76°

Micronesia		
Guam and Rota	Mostly Sunny	▲ 83 ▼ 74
Palau	Rain	▲ 87 ▼ 78
Yap	Cloudy	▲ 87 ▼ 77
Chuuk	Showers	▲ 89 ▼ 79
Pohnpei	Mostly Sunny	▲ 86 ▼ 75
Kosrae	Showers	▲ 88 ▼ 76
Majuro	Partly Sunny	▲ 84 ▼ 77

Around The Globe		
Auckland	Showers	▲ 68 ▼ 57
Beijing	Showers	▲ 45 ▼ 27
Hong Kong	Cloudy	▲ 79 ▼ 61
Honolulu	Showers	▲ 74 ▼ 60
London	Showers	▲ 55 ▼ 41
Los Angeles	Cloudy	▲ 66 ▼ 48
Manila	Sunny	▲ 89 ▼ 76
Melbourne	Showers	▲ 78 ▼ 64
Miami	Mostly Sunny	▲ 81 ▼ 68
New York	Partly Sunny	▲ 44 ▼ 29
Osaka	Partly Sunny	▲ 54 ▼ 43
Paris	Cloudy	▲ 55 ▼ 41
Pusan	Rain	▲ 55 ▼ 39
Rome	Mostly Sunny	▲ 57 ▼ 40
Salem	Mostly Sunny	▲ 54 ▼ 32
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	▲ 61 ▼ 46
Seoul	Showers	▲ 46 ▼ 37
Tokyo	Partly Sunny	▲ 56 ▼ 43
Washington, DC	Partly Sunny	▲ 47 ▼ 33

Tides		
Saipan Harbor		
2:28 AM Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet
8:30 AM Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet
2:55 PM Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet
8:48 PM Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2009
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line extends from 25N152E southwestward to 20N144E to beyond 130E at 18N. Patchy low cloudiness and scattered light showers are found along and up to 100 miles north of this boundary. A near-equatorial trough south of Koror extends from 2N130E to 2N134E to the equator at 139E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring south of Yap and Palau in the area bounded by 5N133E to 5N138E to EQ145E to EQ137E back to 5N133E. Trade-wind convergence is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms southwest of Chuuk in the area bounded by 8N147E to 3N152E to 3N147E back to 8N147E. Strong trade-wind convergence is generating numerous showers and isolated thunderstorms south of Kosrae within 150 miles either side of a line from 2N159E to 4N168E. The heaviest concentration of showers is southeast of Kosrae within 100 miles of 2N165E.

Sunrise/Sunset			Moonrise/Moonset		
Today	6:27 AM	6:27 PM	Today	7:29 PM	6:51 AM
Friday	6:26 AM	6:27 PM	Friday	8:23 PM	7:31 AM
Saturday	6:26 AM	6:27 PM	Saturday	9:16 PM	8:12 AM
Sunday	6:25 AM	6:27 PM	Sunday	10:11 PM	8:55 AM
Monday	6:24 AM	6:27 PM	Monday	11:05 PM	9:40 AM

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A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
 - BUSINESS
Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
 - SAMUT SARI
Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
 - TRAVELOGUE
Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.
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Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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 - Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
 - Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
 - For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.
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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Saturday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of \$160. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 12, 2009					
DEPARTURES			ARRIVALS		
Saipan-Rota			Rota-Saipan		
CO9597	11:50am	12:25pm 1,7	CO 9598	3:25am	4:00am 5,6
Saipan-Guam			Guam-Saipan		
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am Daily	CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am 1,2,3,4,7
CO9313	8:30am	9:20am Daily	CO9598	2:30am	4:00am 5,6 via Rota
CO9597	11:50am	1:20pm 1,7 via Rota	CO9596	7:00am	7:50am Daily
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm 2,3,4,5,6	CO9600	10:20am	11:10am Daily
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm Daily	CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm Daily	CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm Daily	CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm Daily
Saipan-Narita			Narita-Saipan		
NW 099	5:00am	7:35am Daily	NW 076	10:15am	2:40pm Daily
NW 078	8:20am	1:30pm 2,3,4,5,6,7	NW 077	6:25pm	1:20am+1 2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 075	4:55pm	7:30pm Daily	NW 100	8:45pm	1:10am+1 Daily
Guam-Narita			Narita-Guam		
NW 73	4:10pm	7:00pm Daily	NW 74	9:45am	2:20pm Daily
NW 81	3:55pm	6:55pm Daily	NW 82	10:30am	3:10pm Daily
Saipan-Osaka			Osaka-Saipan		
OZ 119	4:00am	6:40am 1,4,6	OZ 120	9:50pm	2:20am+1 3,5,7
Guam-Osaka			Osaka-Guam		
NW 79	4:45pm	7:35pm Daily	NW 80	10:30am	3:00pm Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			Nagoya-Saipan		
NW 078	8:20am	11:05am Daily	NW 077	9:00pm	1:20am+1 Daily
Guam-Nagoya			Nagoya-Guam		
NW 23	4:30pm	7:20pm Daily	NW 24	10:00am	2:30pm Daily
Saipan-Incheon			Incheon-Saipan		
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am 1	OZ 605	9:00am	2:20pm Daily
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am 2,3,4,5,6,7	OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1 7
OZ 119	4:00am	11:25am 1,4,6 via Osaka	OZ 120	7:10pm	2:20am+1 3,5,7
OZ 606	3:20pm	7:00pm Daily	OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1 1,2,3,4,5,6
Saipan-Busan			Busan-Saipan		
OZ 608	3:20am	6:50am 1,4,5,7	OZ 607	9:00pm	2:10am+1 3,4,6,7
Saipan-Shanghai			Shanghai-Saipan		
FM 844	2:50am	5:40am 2,6	FM 843	7:15pm	1:50am+1 1,5
Rota-Guam			Guam-Rota		
CO 9597	12:50pm	1:20pm 1,7	CO 9598	2:30am	3:00am 5,6
Guam-Palau			Palau-Guam		
CO 953	7:40pm	8:40pm 1,7	CO 954	2:30am	5:25am 1,2
CO 893	5:50pm	6:50pm 3,5	CO 892	2:35am	5:30am 4,6
Palau-Manila			Manila-Palau		
CO 893	7:35pm	9:10pm 3,5	CO 892	10:10pm	1:50am+1 3,5
Guam-Manila			Manila-Guam		
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm 3,5 via Koror	CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1 3,5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm Daily	CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1 Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:50am 1,2,4,6,7	PR 110	10:10pm	4:00am+1 1,3,5,6,7
Nagoya-Manila			Manila-Nagoya		
NW 71	8:40pm	11:55pm Daily	NW 72	6:30am	11:05am Daily
Incheon-Hongkong			Hongkong-Incheon		
OZ 721	9:20am	12:00pm Daily	OZ 724	12:30am	4:50am Daily
OZ 723	7:45pm	10:35pm Daily	OZ 7183	12:45am	4:05am 1,4,6
OZ 7173	8:00pm	10:50pm 5,7	OZ 722	1:30pm	5:45pm Daily
Narita-Manila			Manila-Narita		
NW 1	7:00pm	10:55pm Daily	NW 2	7:45am	12:40pm Daily

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency	Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota				FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily	FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan				FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily	FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota				FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily	FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily	Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
Guam-Rota				FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily	FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
Rota-Saipan				FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily	FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
Saipan-Rota				FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily	FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily	FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian				FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily	FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily	FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily	FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily	FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily				
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily				



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

USCG cutter returns from innovative South Pacific law enforcement patrol

HONOLULU—The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard cutter *Rush*, a 378-foot high endurance cutter homeported in Honolulu, returned home last week after a

groundbreaking six-week law enforcement patrol through the South Pacific.

The *Rush*'s crew conducted joint law enforcement opera-

tions with three embarked Republic of Kiribati law enforcement officials under a new diplomatic ship rider agreement recently signed between the U.S. and Kiribati governments.

The bilateral agreement has drawn attention at the highest level of the Department of Homeland Security for its success and was mentioned by the Coast Guard Commandant in a recent "State of the Coast

Guard" address.

In one instance, *Rush* crew members and the Kiribati officers boarded a Japanese-flagged fishing vessel suspected of violating the terms of their license to fish in Kiribati waters. As a result of the boarding, the Kiribati government arrested the master, and seized the vessel and its catch of more than 22,000 pounds of fish, assessing fines and penal-

ties exceeding \$700,000.

A second joint boarding resulted in the voyage termination of a Kiribati-flagged tanker vessel operating without a bunker license. A bunker license authorizes a vessel with maximum fuel capacity of 10,500 gallons or more to transfer fuel to another vessel. The tanker is suspected of operating within Kiribati waters and bunkering to vessels engaging in illegal fishing. The case is under ongoing investigation by the Kiribati National Police.

Rush crew members also conducted two high seas Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission boardings, includ-

ing the first-ever WCPFC boarding conducted by the United States of a Chinese-flagged fishing vessel pursuant to this international boarding scheme.

The WCPFC is a regional fisheries management organization whose objective is to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of highly migratory fish stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean. The fishery is valued at more than \$3 billion annually and over half of the global tuna catch is caught from this area, which stretches across the Pacific Ocean from the south coast of Australia to the Bering Sea.

"The new ship rider agreement between the U.S. and Kiribati represents a positive step forward in increased enforcement cooperation to address illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the region that threatens the sustainability of these valuable fish stocks," said Cmdr. Mark Young, the Coast Guard's Chief of Enforcement for the Fourteenth District.

"The fantastic results of *Rush* and the embarked Kiribati ship riders clearly demonstrates to others in the region our resolve to eliminate the illegal activities and unsustainable practices that threaten our collective resources."

The *Rush* is one of two 378-foot high endurance cutters based in Honolulu and was launched in 1968 and has a crew of 20 officers and 148 enlisted Coast Guard men and women. (USCG)

NMI cooking contest adds youth category

The Cook-A-Rainbow event is back and in addition to the non-professional category, a youth category has been added.

"We've been inspired with previous cooking contestants we decided to add a new category for this annual event," said Patricia Coleman, contest coordinator. The youth category is open to students between the ages of 10 and 17 years.

The challenge is still open to nonprofessionals; nonprofessionals are members of the community with no association to a restaurant or food service establishment.

Participation is limited and interested cooks must sign up before March 30.

According to Coleman, judging will be based on taste, creative presentation, texture, use of fresh local ingredients

and originality. Registrations must be submitted no later than 4pm on Mon, March 30, 2009 to Rose Castro or Patricia Coleman at NMC-CREES. Entries may also be submitted via fax at 234-0054.

The Cook A Rainbow Challenge will take place at the Sabalu Market on Saturday, April 25, 2009 at 10am.

The Cook A Rainbow Challenge is coordinated by the Ayuda Network, CNMI Diabetes Prevention and Control Program, NMC-CREES, PSS-Headstart, DPH-Breast and Cervical Cancer Program, the Commonwealth Cancer Association and the Division of Environmental Quality.

For more information about the Cook A Rainbow Challenge, contact Rose or Patricia at 234-5498 ext. 1726 or 1703. (DEQ)



U.S. COAST GUARD

The crew of the 378-foot high endurance cutter *Rush*, homeported in Honolulu, returned home last week after a ground-breaking six-week law enforcement patrol through the South Pacific.



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Fax: 235-8774



CHALAN KANOA

Open Monday to Saturday 9:00am - 9:00pm
Sunday: 9:00am - 7:00pm
Tel: 235-7887
Fax: 235-8774



ROTA BRANCH

Open Monday to Saturday 9:00am - 7:00pm
Sunday: 9:00am - 7:00pm
Tel: 532-8778



Island Snapshots



MAKAKA BEACH CLEANUP

Employees of the ABC Store volunteer their time at the DEQ Cleanup Brigade at Makaka Beach on Saturday, March 7. The cleanup netted 1,160 pounds of garbage from Makaka Beach.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

DEQ volunteers continue to observe open dumping activities. In this photo, it appears that a vehicle recently backed up into the bushes and emptied the waste onto the ground.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



DEMO FINGERPRINTING

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, left, and Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Jim Arenovski, right, watch the fingerprinting demonstration at the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Center in Garapan yesterday.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO



SESSION BREAK

Rep. Victor Hocog, Ind-Rota, left, confers with Department of Public Lands counsel Braddock Huesman, center, and Neo Gold Wings Paradise counsel Jesse Borja during a break at the joint session of the House and Senate on Friday. With a 25-3 vote, the land lease agreement between the Department of Public Lands and Neo Gold Wings got legislative approval.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO



GROUNDBREAKING

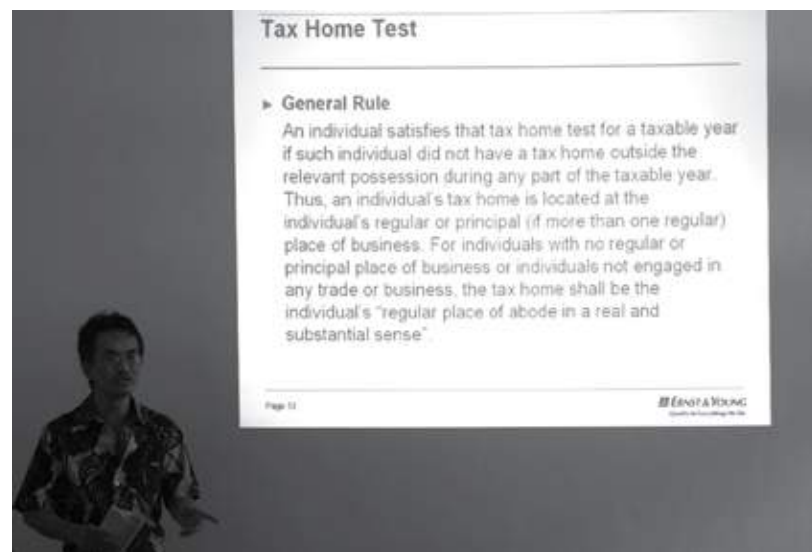
Commerce Secretary Michael S. Ada, fourth from left, joins officials of Flame Sako Resort and Spa during the groundbreaking rites for the \$60 million to \$80 million resort project in As Matuis last Friday, March 6, 2009.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO



Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Jim Arenovski, left, joins officials of Flame Sako Resort and Spa during the groundbreaking rites for the \$60 million to \$80 million resort project in As Matuis last Friday, March 6, 2009.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO



LET'S TALK ABOUT TAX

Edmund Brobesong, a senior manager at Ernst & Young-Guam, makes a presentation about bona fide resident test/source of income rules at a tax workshop hosted by the Saipan Chamber of Commerce yesterday in Garapan.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

HIGHER EDUCATION

Three Tinian Elementary School teachers completed their master's degree in education this year. Receiving their new diplomas at the Feb. 28, 2009, graduation ceremony on Saipan were Lou Connie Manglona, first grade teacher; Dionne Santos, first grade teacher; and Jennifer San Nicolas, third grade teacher. Last year Christina Zucarro was awarded her Ph.D in education. From left are Dionne Santos, Christina Zucarro, Lou Connie Manglona, and Jennifer San Nicolas.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Business

Congress OKs \$410B spending bill

WASHINGTON (AP)—Congress on Tuesday sent President Barack Obama a once-bipartisan bill to fund the domestic Cabinet agencies that evolved instead into a symbol of lawmakers' free-spending ways and penchant for back-home pet projects. The Senate approved the measure by voice after it cleared a key procedural hurdle by a 62-35 vote. Sixty votes were required to shut down debate.

Obama is expected to sign the measure Wednesday to avoid a partial shutdown of the government. But the White House has kept the bill at arm's length, calling it last year's business. Obama is also set to announce steps aimed at curbing lawmakers' so-called earmarks.

The \$410 billion bill is chock-full of those pet projects and significant increases in food aid for the poor, energy research and other programs. It was supposed

to have been completed last fall, but Democrats opted against election-year battles with Republicans and former President George W. Bush.

The measure was a top priority for Democratic leaders, who praised it for numerous increases denied by Bush. It once enjoyed support from Republicans such as Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky.

But the bill ran into an unexpected political hailstorm in Congress after Obama's spending-heavy economic stimulus bill and his 2010 budget plan forecasting a \$1.8 trillion deficit for the current budget year. And Republicans seized on Obama's willingness to sign a bill packed with earmarks after he assailed them as a candidate.

"If it had not been for the stimulus and the budget proposal it might have been ... non-

controversial," said House GOP leader John Boehner of Ohio. "The stimulus bill riled an awful lot of people up. ... And then the budget proposal comes out."

Within Democratic ranks, there was relief, not jubilation.

The 1,132-page spending bill has an extraordinary reach, wrapping together nine spending bills to fund foreign aid and the annual operating budgets of every Cabinet department except for Defense, Homeland Security and Veterans Affairs.

It also contains numerous policy changes, including shutting down a program allowing Mexican trucking companies to operate beyond U.S.-Mexico border zones, easing rules on Cuban-Americans traveling to the island to visit relatives and allowing quick reversal of Bush administration rules opposed by environmentalists.

Madoff to plead guilty, could face up to 150 years

NEW YORK (AP)—In a courtroom surprise, it was revealed Tuesday that Bernard Madoff will plead guilty Thursday to securities fraud, perjury and other crimes, knowing that he could face up to 150 years in prison for one of the largest frauds in history. The revelation came as prosecutors unveiled an 11-count charging document against the 70-year-old former Nasdaq chairman, and as his lawyer, Ira Sorkin, told a judge that Madoff planned to plead guilty this week without a plea deal.

Madoff has been under house arrest in his \$7 million Manhattan penthouse since he was arrested in early December after authorities said he confessed to his family that he had carried out a \$50 billion fraud. In court documents filed Tuesday, prosecutors raised the size of the fraud to \$64.8 billion, an amount recounted in apparently false statements from November 2008.

Authorities reviewing the finances of Madoff's business say the actual loss was more



In this Wednesday, Jan. 14, 2009 file photo, Bernard L. Madoff, the accused mastermind of a \$50 billion Ponzi scheme, leaves Federal Court in New York.

likely much less and that higher numbers reflect false profits he promised investors. So far, authorities have located about \$1 billion for jilted investors.

Sorkin, prosecutors and U.S. District Judge Denny Chin presaged the drama likely to unfold Thursday as Madoff, wearing a gray suitcoat over a black tie, sat quietly beside his lawyers.

Madoff, who wears a bulletproof vest, arrived at court more than three hours before the hearing as authorities tried to diminish the chance he would face a confrontation with investors. Several lawyers for investors showed up as spectators, but the courtroom was largely packed with members of the media.

next month's meeting of leaders from the world's 20 major economic powers.

Oil lurks near \$46 after demand report slows rally

SINGAPORE (AP)—Oil prices crept toward \$46 a barrel Wednesday in Asia after the U.S. Energy Department cut its 2009 crude demand forecast, stalling a two-week rally. Benchmark crude for April delivery rose 2 cents to \$45.73 a barrel by midday in Singapore on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Oil prices fell \$1.36 on Tuesday to settle at \$45.71. The department's Energy Information Administration said Tuesday it lowered its forecast for global oil demand for this year by 200,000 barrels a day from last month and now projects a decline of almost 1.4 million barrel a day in 2009. Its projection for global oil consumption this year is now 3 million barrels a day below its forecast from September.

Commonwealth I Sankattan Siha Na Islas Mariana Ofisinan I Gubietno Dipattamenton I Tano' Ppubliku

NOTISIAN MAPROPONE POT ATKILON T'ANO' PUPBLIKU

Kinonsiste ni Seksiona 106 (b) gi Lai Ppubliku 15-2, I Dipattamenton I Tano' Ppubliku man nana'i' notisia pot I intension na para u ma'atila I tano' pupbluku giya Saipan, Commonwealth I Sankattan Siha Na Islas Mariana. Maseha hayi na petsona gi pupbluku henerat siha muna halom opinion, infotmasion, kinontran testimonio pot para u kuentayi I propositun I Kontratan Atkilon. Ni maprobeniyi mas ginen I Lai Ppubliku 15-2, manisisita para u mapupblika I man imputante na infotmasion gi sigente:

- I tano' pupbluku ni ma'atila madeskribi kumo Sitio Numiro 190 E 01 a konsisiste kasi 4,809 square meters menos osino mas, ni gaige gi Lower Base giya Saipan. Kopian I lugat I sitio gaige gi Dipattamenton I Tano' Ppubliku para u ma'ina.
- I para u atkila I Cargo Express (Saipan), Inc., un koporasion giya CNMI. I Direktot I Kuetpon I koporasion I man sigente: si Liberato C. Legaspi, Marie Christine T. Legaspi, Alejo C. Legaspi, yan si Lawrence Lemuel T. Legaspi.

I presidente I koporasion si Liberato C. Legaspi. I segundon I presidete si Marie Christine T. Legaspi. I sekretario si Lawrence Lemuel T. Legaspi. I tresurerun si Alejo C. Legaspi.

- Si Siñot Liberato C. Legaspi yan si Siñot Noel Masongsong a negosio I kontrata para I mapropone na atkilon.
- I para u fanatkila debi u na'setbi i tano' solamenti para u na'guaha' fasilidat para muna'hanao katga siha.

I tiempom I mapropositu na Kontratan Atkilon bente-singo años (25 yrs.), gai' chansa para u ekstiende para talo kinse años (15 yrs.).

I mapropositu na apas atkilon gi sakan duranten I tiempo sigun I mapega na presiu pot I baliña I lugat.

- I kabales na kopian I Kontratan Atkilon siha u machule' gi Ofisinan I Dipattamenton I Tano' Ppubliku, ni gaige gi mina dos na bibienda gi Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, giya Saipan, mina dos bibienda gi Bank of Saipan Commercial Building giya Luta, fine'nina na bibienda gi Kings Commercial Building giya Tinian.

- Ti maresibe' otro na klasen propositu ni I Dipattamenton I Tano' Ppubliku ni para u ma'atila I tano' giya Lower Base, Saipan.

- I Sekretario gi Dipattamenton I Tano' Ppubliku siempre a akseptat tinige' opinion, mensáhen kinontra yan testimonio osino otro siha na propositu ginen I man enteresao na petsona gi pat ántes di Matso 23, 2009 gi Ofisinan I Dipattamenton I Tano' Ppubliku ni gaige giya Saipan, Tinian yan Luta.

ARONGORONG REEL POMWOL AKKILONUL FALÚWEER TOULAP

Sangi Tálil 106 (b) mellól Alléghúl Toulap ye 15-2, Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap ekki atotoowow ammataf igha ebwe akkilaaló eghús falúw mellól Seipél, Commonwealth Téel Falúwasch Marianas. Schóókka eyoor máfiyeer rebwe isisilong ischil mángamangiir, aweewe, aingiingil reel pomwol akkilonul ammwelil falúweer toulap. Me bwal Alléghúl Toulap ye 15-2, e ayoor, lamal aweewe kka rebwe mweiti ngali milikka ebwe akkatéeló.

- Pomwol akkilonul falúweer toulap ekki bwaári Lot No.190 E 01, eyoor faawu sangaras walabwughúw tiwoow (4,809 square meters), elap me ngare eghús, elo Lower Base, Seipél. Tilighial bwuley yeel nge eyoor llól Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap (Public Lands) ngare óubwe ghuley fischiy.
- Schéschéel schóól akkilon nge Cargo Express (Saipan), Inc., CNMI corporation. Schóóy mwiisch mellol Corporation nge Liberato C. Legaspi, Marie Christine T. Legaspi, Alejo C. Legaspi, me Lawrence Lemuel T. Legaspi.

Schóóy assamwool nge Liberato C. Legaspi, Vice President nge Marie Christine T. Legaspi, sekkretario nge Alejo C. Legaspi, treasurer nge Lawrence Lemuel T. Legaspi.

- Schóól aweweel akkilon nge Mr. Liberato C. Legaspi me Mr. Noel C. Masongsong.

- Schóóy akkilon ebwe yáali bwuley reel leliyel ammwelil kkaragha schagh.

Tool aighúghúl pomwol akkilon ebwe ruweigh me limwoow ráagh (25 years), emmwel rebwe sóbweey ngáli bwal seigh me limwoow ráagh (15 years).

Pomwol akkilon ebwe mwir sangi llapal méel falúw (value of the property) fengal me milikka re ayuuw mellol faluw.

- Emmwel óubwe bwughil tilighial akkilon mellól bwulasiyool ammwelil falúweer toulap, elo aruwowal pwó(2nd floor) me Joeten Dandan Commercial Building llól Dandan, Seipél; aruwowal pwó (2nd floor) mellól Bank of Saipan Commercial Buiding, Luuta; me ngare mmwal pwó (1st floor) mellól Kings Commercial Building, Tchúlyól.

- Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap nge esáál bweibwogh mwo akkáaw pomwol akkilon yeel me Lower Base, Saipan.

Samwoolul Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap ebwe bwughil aweewe kkaal, aingiingil, mereer amweyút aramas mmwal schagh Mááilap (March) 23, 2009 mellól Depattamentool Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap iye elo Seipél, Luuta me Tchúlyól.

NOTICE OF PROPOSED LEASE OF PUBLIC LAND

In accordance with Section 106 (b) of Public Law 15-2, the Department of Public Lands hereby gives notice of its intent to lease certain public lands in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Any interested parties of the general public may submit comments, data, views, or arguments of alternative proposals for the lease of the public land. As further provided by Public Law 15-2, the following pertinent information is required to be published.

- The proposed lease of public land is described as Lot No. 190 E 01, containing an area of approximately 4,809 square meters, more or less, situated in Lower Base, Saipan. A copy of the location of the parcel is available at the Department of Public Lands for inspection.

- The prospective lessee is Cargo Express (Saipan), Inc., a CNMI corporation. The board of directors of the corporation are Liberato C. Legaspi, Marie Christine T. Legaspi, Alejo C. Legaspi, and Lawrence Lemuel T. Legaspi.

The President of the corporation is Liberato C. Legaspi. The vice president is Marie Christine T. Legaspi. The secretary is Lawrence Lemuel T. Legaspi. The Treasurer is Alejo C. Legaspi.

- The proposed lease was negotiated by Mr. Liberato C. Legaspi and Mr. Noel C. Masongsong.

- The lessee shall use the premises solely for the purpose of developing and operating a freight forwarding facility.

The term of the proposed lease agreement is 25 years, with an option to extend the lease for an additional 15 years.

The proposed annual rental during the term is based on a percentage of the appraised fair market value of the property including existing structures.

- A copy of the proposed lease agreement may be obtained at the office of the Department of Public Lands, located on the 2nd floor of the Joeten Dandan Commercial Building in Dandan, Saipan; the 2nd floor of the Bank of Saipan Commercial Building, Rota; or the 1st floor of the Kings Commercial Building, Tinian.

- The Department of Public Lands has received no alternative proposals to lease the subject public land in Lower Base, Saipan.

- The Secretary of the Department of Public Lands shall accept written comments, views, arguments or alternative proposals from interested parties on or before March 23, 2009 at the Department of Public Lands offices located in Saipan, Rota or Tinian.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Bernanke says regulatory overhaul needed

WASHINGTON (AP)—The nation's financial rule book must be rewritten to prevent a repeat of the global economic crisis now gripping the United States and other countries, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke said Tuesday. "We must have a strategy that regulates the financial system as a whole ... not just its individual components," Bernanke said in a speech to the Council on Foreign Relations. Bernanke offered new details on how to bolster mutual funds and a program that insures bank deposits. He also stressed the need for regulators to make sure financial companies have a sufficient capital cushion against potential losses. The Fed chief's remarks come as the Obama administration and Congress are crafting their overhaul strategies. For the administration, critical work will be carried out among global finance officials this weekend in London ahead of

Nation

Ala. gunmen kills 9, himself in shooting spree

SAMSON, Ala. (AP)—A gunman on a terrifying rampage across two southern Alabama counties killed at least nine people Tuesday, including members of his own family and apparent strangers, and burned down his mother's home before shooting himself at a metals plant, authorities said.

Police were investigating shootings in at least four different locations in several communities, all of which were believed to be the work of a single gunman who had not yet been identified by investigators.

The afternoon of bloodshed began in Kinston, near the Alabama-Florida border, where the shooter burned down his mother's house, according to the Coffee County coroner, Robert Preachers. Officials located the woman's body inside the house, but they had not been able to get inside the still-burning house to determine if he shot her first.

The gunman then headed east, into Geneva County, where he shot and killed five people—four adults and a child—at a home in the nearby town of Samson. Then he killed one person each in two other homes. The identities of all the victims were unknown, but Preachers said they included other



Family members of the victims of a shooting walk away after being denied access to their home in Samson, Ala. on Tuesday afternoon, March 10, 2009.

members of the shooter's family. "He started in his mother's house," Preachers said. "Then

he went to Samson and he killed his granny and granddaddy and aunt and uncle."

Church shooting suspect left 'Last Day Will' card

ST. LOUIS (AP)—The man accused of gunning down an Illinois pastor during his sermon as horrified churchgoers watched left an index card marked "Last Day Will" at his home, according to court documents filed Tuesday.

Other documents detail how the Rev. Fred Winters tried to run from accused gunman Terry Sedlacek at First Baptist Church in Maryville, Ill., a St. Louis suburb, before the preacher collapsed and bled to

death Sunday.

Authorities say Sedlacek, 27, of nearby Troy, fired four times from a .45-caliber Glock pistol, hitting Winters once in the heart.

The court papers indicate investigators have found an arsenal in Sedlacek's bedroom, including two 12-gauge shotguns, a rifle and a box of 550 .22-caliber bullets. An inventory of items seized from his home also lists the "Last Day Will" index card but does not detail what else was written on it.

A prosecutor said Monday that a day planner found on Sedlacek's dresser referred to Sunday as "death day," suggesting Sedlacek planned the attack. Authorities say Sedlacek brought to the church enough ammunition to kill 30 people.

Sedlacek was charged Monday with first-degree murder and aggravated battery in the shooting of Winters and the knife wounds suffered by two congregants who wrestled him to the ground after the shooting.

gel, Fargo's director of operations, said late afternoon.

Museum reveals engraving hidden in Lincoln watch

WASHINGTON (AP)—For nearly 150 years, a story has circulated about a hidden Civil War message engraved inside Abraham Lincoln's pocket watch. On Tuesday, museum curators confirmed it was true. A watchmaker used tiny tools to carefully pry open the antique watch at the National Museum of American History, and a descendant of the engraver read aloud the message from a metal plate underneath the watch face. "April 13—1861," the first line reads, "Fort Sumpter (sic) was attacked by the rebels on the above date. J Dillon." The second part repeats same date, states the location as Washington and says, "Thank God we have a government." Jonathan Dillon, then a watchmaker on Pennsylvania Avenue, had Lincoln's watch in his hands

when he heard the first shots of the Civil War had been fired in South Carolina. The Irish immigrant later recalled being the only Union sympathizer working at the shop in a divided Washington.

Octuplets mom readying move, babies' homecoming

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Octuplet mother Nadya Suleman says she's busy preparing to move to a new house and that four of the babies born premature are healthy enough to leave the hospital. Suleman told television's Dr. Phil McGraw on his show Tuesday that she put money made from selling photos of her babies into escrow for the new home near Los Angeles. Suleman's father is buying the 2,583-square-foot house, which listed for \$564,900. Prudential Realty listing agent Mike Patel says the deal on the home may close as soon as Tuesday. Suleman also says some of the money will go into a trust for the care of her 14 children.

World

Iraqi suicide attack kills 33; US blames al-Qaida

BAGHDAD (AP)—A suicide bomber struck Sunni and Shiite tribal leaders touring an outdoor market after a reconciliation meeting in a Baghdad suburb Tuesday, killing up to 33 people in the second major attack in the capital area in three days. The bombings are raising fears that Sunni insurgents may be escalating operations as the U.S. phases out its combat role in Iraq and prepares to withdraw troops from cities by the end of June.

The attacks also suggest that insurgents are capable

of exploiting weaknesses in Iraqi security procedures. The Iraqis have been relatively successful in curbing huge truck bombings that were common years ago—but less so against other tactics.

More than 40 people were wounded Tuesday when the bomber detonated an explosives belt as tribal leaders, security officials and journalists strolled through the market in the town of Abu Ghraib, site of the infamous prison at the center of the 2004 detainee

abuse scandal.

The leaders had just left a meeting called as part of a government campaign to reconcile local Sunni tribes and Shiites who fled the mostly Sunni town on Baghdad's western outskirts two years ago but have been trickling back to their homes.

No group claimed responsibility for the attack, but U.S. and Iraqi officials blamed al-Qaida, suspecting the extremists want to sabotage government overtures to the Sunnis—the terror group's support base.

Officials: US ship in China spat was hunting subs

WASHINGTON (AP)—The U.S. Navy ship that got into a scrape with five Chinese vessels last weekend in the South China Sea was looking for threats such as submarines—presumably Chinese—in waters that China claims as its own, defense officials acknowledged Tuesday.

The United States maintains that the unarmed USNS *Impeccable* was operating legally in international waters

when it was surrounded and harassed by the Chinese. Beijing responded hotly to a U.S. protest over Sunday's incident, and neither nation is backing down, even as they prepare for a much-anticipated first meeting between President Barack Obama and Chinese President Hu Jintao next month.

Although they would not be specific about the *Impeccable*'s mission when it was intercepted by the Chinese ships, two

defense officials said the ship is designed and equipped for sub-hunting work and was part of a calculated U.S. surveillance operation in the disputed South China Sea.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because the ship's exact capabilities are sensitive. Other U.S. officials have said on the record that the U.S. military will continue to patrol in the South China Sea despite Chinese objections.

Iran does not have key nuclear material—intelligence

WASHINGTON (AP)—Iran does not yet have any highly enriched uranium, the fuel needed to make a nuclear warhead, two top U.S. intelligence officials told Congress Tuesday, disputing a claim by an Israeli official.

U.S. National Intelligence Director Dennis Blair and Defense Intelligence Agency Director Lt. Gen. Michael

Maples said Tuesday that Iran has only low-enriched uranium—which would need to be refined into highly enriched uranium before it can fuel a warhead. Neither officials said there were indications that refining has occurred.

Their comments disputed a claim made last weekend by Israel's top intelligence mili-

tary official, who said Iran has crossed a technical threshold and is now capable of producing atomic weapons.

The claim made by Israeli Maj. Gen. Amos Yadlin runs counter to estimates by U.S. intelligence that the earliest Iran could produce a weapon is 2010, with some analysts saying it is more likely that it is 2015.

ACROSS THE NATION

Snow closes businesses, highways in upper Midwest

FARGO, N.D. (AP)—Heavy snow driven by wind gusting to 40 mph brought parts of the upper Midwest to a halt Tuesday, closing courts, schools, businesses and two major highways. Up to a foot of snow was forecast Tuesday for parts of eastern North Dakota and western Minnesota. The National Weather Service posted blizzard warnings and winter storm warnings for wide areas of North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota. All three states reported school closings. North Dakota officials closed Interstate 29 from the Canadian border to the South Dakota state line. Earlier, Minnesota and North Dakota authorities shut down a 130-mile stretch of Interstate 94 from Jamestown, N.D., to Fergus Falls, Minn. "There's all kinds of people out there," despite the warnings, and many of them were stuck on roadways, Al Wei-

WORLD BRIEFS

Officials: Afghanistan Taliban leader was at Gitmo

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Taliban's new top operations officer in southern Afghanistan had been a prisoner at the Guantanamo Bay detention center, the latest example of a freed detainee who took a militant leadership role and a potential complication for the Obama administration's efforts to close the prison. U.S. authorities handed over the detainee to the Afghan government, which in turn released him, according to Pentagon and CIA officials. Abdullah Ghulam Rasoul, formerly Guantanamo prisoner No. 008, was among 13 Afghan prisoners released to the Afghan government in December 2007. Rasoul is now known as Mullah Abdullah Zakir, a nom de guerre that Pentagon and intelligence officials say is used by a Taliban leader who is in charge of operations against U.S. and Afghan

forces in southern Afghanistan.

IRA dissident killings unites Northern Ireland

BELFAST, Northern Ireland (AP)—The Protestant and Catholic leaders of Northern Ireland mounted an exceptional display of unity against rising violence from Irish Republican Army dissidents—and vowed Tuesday to defeat hard-liners with the power of popular will. Former IRA commander Martin McGuinness, who long hoped that slaying police officers would help him achieve his dream of a united Ireland, stood shoulder to shoulder with his Protestant partner atop the government, Peter Robinson, and Northern Ireland police commander Hugh Orde. The scene itself was an unprecedented surprise. More stunning were the clear-cut words from McGuinness, whose Sinn Fein party has faced years of outside

pressure to embrace British law and order.

Dalai Lama: Tibetans 'suffering' under China

DHARMSALA, India (AP)—Life for Tibetans under Chinese rule has been "hell on earth," the Dalai Lama said Tuesday, attacking Beijing in a speech to mark 50 years since the failed uprising that forced him into exile. The unusually harsh rhetoric from the Nobel Peace laureate, who accused the Chinese government of treating his people "like criminals deserving to be put to death," highlighted the widening gulf between the two sides since last year when violence engulfed the region and talks broke down. "These 50 years have brought untold suffering to the land and people of Tibet," the 73-year-old Buddhist spiritual leader told some 2,000 Tibetan exiles gathered to commemorate the 1959 rebellion.

Environment

2nd graders learn value of keeping beaches clean

Editor's Note: This was submitted by Kathy Pagapular, a San Vicente Elementary School 2nd grade teacher. The beach cleanup was participated in by Pagapular's and Diane Mallari's 2nd Grade classes.

Picking up trash along the way, 20 second graders from San Vicente Elementary School, accompanied by parent volunteers, hiked to LauLau Beach on a beautiful Wednesday morning. Our fieldtrip was tied to the study on coral reefs and the ongoing effort to beautify our island. Here are some journal entries that our students wrote beforehand.

We need to clean our beach so the animals in the ocean can be safe. We can also eat some of them but not every

animal. That's why we need to make the sea creatures healthy by keeping our ocean clean. Our class will also clean Lau Lau so the sand can be white again.

—Neilihner Saimon

We should clean Lau Lau or any other beach because the fish would die and get sick from pollution. The sea turtles might eat trash, too. People could also cut their feet from the glass. That's it folks!

—Gary Camacho

There are five reasons why we need to protect our ocean.

If people will continue to throw trash in the ocean, the fish will die and we will have no food.

The corals will die and the big wave will just swamp our island when it comes.

When the water is dirty the corals can't breath and no one will like to go diving anymore.

When you drive on the beach the turtles nest will be destroyed.

When you drive on the beach you will kill the vegetation and the other animals that eat the plant.

—Lisa (Su Hyeon) Jo

We're doing a beach cleanup to keep our corals and sea creatures from dying. We are going to help the animals and the environment that they live in.

—Jehpnill Ejercito

When the trash goes in the water it

makes water pollution. That makes the coral die. It also makes the fish die, when the fish die, bigger fish won't have food and people would also run out of big fish to eat. But San Vicente 2nd graders will clean up the beach so we can help save the ocean animals.

—Rayanna Fitial

Why is it bad to throw trash on the ground? Because when it rains it flows down and it usually ends up in the sea. People just don't care that's why we will hike to Lau Lau beach. Now the sea could be clean and the coral could be safe.

—Noah Santa Maria

Pacific conservationists visit Seychelles

Conservationists from the U.S. territories of Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands and Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, and Marshall Islands are in the Seychelles for an exchange visit, APA learns in the Seychellois capital Victoria on Tuesday.

The environmentalists are in the Seychelles as part of the Micronesia Challenge, a regional inter-governmental initiative in the western Pacific region to conserve marine and forest resources more effectively.

At a workshop on Tuesday at the Seychelles Fishing Authority's conference room in Victoria, acting principal secretary for environment Wills Agricole said the visit shows that the Seychelles has a good international reputa-

tion for environmental protection.

He said the Seychelles government is aware of the fragile ecology of the islands and the crucial role it plays in the country's economy.

Joseph Aitaro, the delegation chief and national coordinator for the protected areas network of Palau said his delegation is impressed by the way Seychelles manages and carries out its environment protection programs, particularly in the field of sustainable financing.

He said the delegates would like during their two-week stay to learn from the Seychelles experience on how to make environmental programs financially self-sufficient and independent. (APA-Victoria)

Progress made toward mitigating sea turtle bycatch in coastal net fisheries

HONOLULU—Growing evidence is indicating that small-scale artisanal fisheries may be the largest single threat to some sea turtle populations. These fisheries use gill nets, pound nets, large fixed fish traps and other static gear that inadvertently catch, tangle and drown the turtles. The three-day Technical Workshop on Mitigating Sea Turtle Bycatch in Coastal Net Fisheries, which recently concluded in Honolulu, made significant strides toward addressing this threat.

"Large numbers of turtles, especially North Pacific loggerheads, are caught and killed each year by pound nets and gillnets," said Kitty Simonds, executive director of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, which convened the workshop. "Transferring new gear technology and other mitigation measures from net fisheries where progress has been made to address this problem to similar fisheries in other regions was one of the major objectives of the workshop."

Pound nets are used extensively around the coastal waters of Japan and other parts of East Asia, while gillnets are employed around the Pacific Rim and in Pacific Islands. The workshop looked at promising solutions from the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans to minimize turtle catches in both types of gear. For example, while many fisheries use pound nets that have submerged catch chambers in which captive turtles drown, other pound nets have an open catching chamber where turtle can reach the surface to breathe.

The workshop provided the first opportunity for experts from multiple relevant disciplines to share information from 20 gillnet and pound-net fisheries worldwide. Participants

reviewed the assessment status and mitigation activities of the fisheries; shared information on effective, affordable gear to mitigate sea turtle capture and injury in coastal net fisheries; identified research priorities to advance turtle-friendly gear and fishing methods; and explored the range of tools available to assess, mitigate and manage sea turtle bycatch in artisanal fisheries.

"The meeting fostered new partnership and has effectively advanced the transfer of best practices for bycatch mitigation in artisanal coastal net fisheries," said Eric Gilman, International Union for the Conservation of Nature marine science adviser.

The workshop is the latest in a decade long series of initiatives by the Council's Protected Species Program to recover Pacific sea turtle populations. The workshop included 49 participants from 17 countries, representing intergovernmental organizations, fishery agencies, national fishery management authorities, environmental non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, fishing industries and donor organizations. It was co-hosted by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center, the Indiana Ocean-Southeast Asian Marine turtle MoU and the US National Marine Fisheries Service's Southeast Fisheries Science Center.

Proceedings and a technical report on mitigating sea turtle bycatch in coastal net fisheries will be available in coming weeks. For copies or more information on the workshop, contact Gilman at eric.gilman@iucn.org. (Wespac)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The 2nd Grade classes of Kathy Pagapular and Diane Mallari at the San Vicente Elementary School are joined by parent volunteers for a cleanup activity at the LauLau Beach on a recent Wednesday morning.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Second grade students at the San Vicente Elementary School mug for the camera during a cleanup at the LauLau Beach Wednesday morning.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The students and parent volunteers scour the length of the LauLau Beach for trash and other debris.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A parent volunteer is joined under the shade by second grade students of the San Vicente Elementary School during the cleanup.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Volunteers hike to LauLau Beach on a recent Wednesday morning to do a beach cleanup.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

These students and a parent take a short break from the beach cleanup.

Life & Style



The Great Wall of China.

KRISTI EATON

Busy in Beijing

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

BEIJING, China—I achieved one of my life goals recently. I climbed the Great Wall of China.

I'm not really sure how old I was when I first learned about the Great Wall, but I know that ever since a young age I've read about it in textbooks and wanted to see it. But growing up in middle America, visiting the Great Wall seemed as likely as traveling to the moon (which, coincidentally, is another goal of mine). Seeing the Great Wall was one of those goals you never really think will transpire. Well, for me it just did.

The Great Wall—a 4,000 mile stretch of walls from eastern to western China—was as enormous and breathtaking as pictures make it seem. And, for someone who considers herself in pretty good physical shape, the approximately two miles that I walked of it were tough. I climbed along the Badaling section of the Great Wall, one of the more crowded areas but also one of the closest to Beijing, about an hour drive outside of the city. Some parts of the wall were straight steep hills while some areas were more flat. It was obvious millions of people had traversed along the wall. Many of the steps were eroded in the middle by the repeated pounding of body weight. But no matter how tiring it was or how frustrating it was to deal with the large crowds of people, there



Inside the Forbidden City, the Chinese imperial palace from the Ming Dynasty.

KRISTI EATON



Visitors throw coins in the Forbidden City Imperial Gardens.

KRISTI EATON



Two girls play in Tiananmen Square.

KRISTI EATON

was no feeling like the one I felt when I stopped, breathed in the cold winter China air and realized I was looking out at a piece of architecture that was built thousands of years ago.

After climbing the Wall, I gave in to my inner tourist and went crazy in the gift shop, buying the same type of souvenirs that I secretly laugh about when I see them bought by tourists on Saipan. I imagine I'll only visit the Great Wall once in my life, and, by golly, I'm going to remember it with little trinkets.

But hiking the Great Wall of China wasn't enough for one day for me. I didn't think the day could get much better. How could it? I'd just completed what I believed was the impossible. Oh, it could and it did. I thought eating bullfrog two days before was going to be the highlight of my exotic foods experience, but I was just getting warmed up, apparently. During dinner at a hotpot restaurant, I told the tour guide I'd try anything once. So when

the lamb testicles arrived at the table I was the first one to dig in. My adventurous spirit seemed to rub off and pretty soon everyone in the group was giving the lamb a try, making sure to document the experience with plenty of pictures along the way.

The following day found me at the Forbidden City, the Chinese imperial palace from the Ming Dynasty. History was endless as I walked from room to room, but one of the most intriguing aspects of the visit to the city was the discovery of what I have coined the "split baby bottom pants." The name says it all. Babies were seen walking around the area wearing pants with slits for quick access to the bathroom. Never before had I seen anything like it. Not only did I learn about



The millions of people that have traveled along the Great Wall have eroded some of the steps.

KRISTI EATON

the phenomenon of split baby bottom pants that day, but I learned the true art of bartering in China. I thought I'd experienced and gotten some great deals bargaining in Mexico and Italy. I was wrong. In China, buying something for half the original price is a rip-off, I learned. I was able to buy earrings that were originally 800 yuan (about \$119 at 6.7 yuan to one dollar) for 100 yuan (about \$15). At one local market, I decided I would not spend more than 40 yuan (about \$6) on anything—a



One of the many buildings built specifically for the 2008 Summer Olympics held in Beijing.

KRISTI EATON



Lamb testicle.

KRISTI EATON

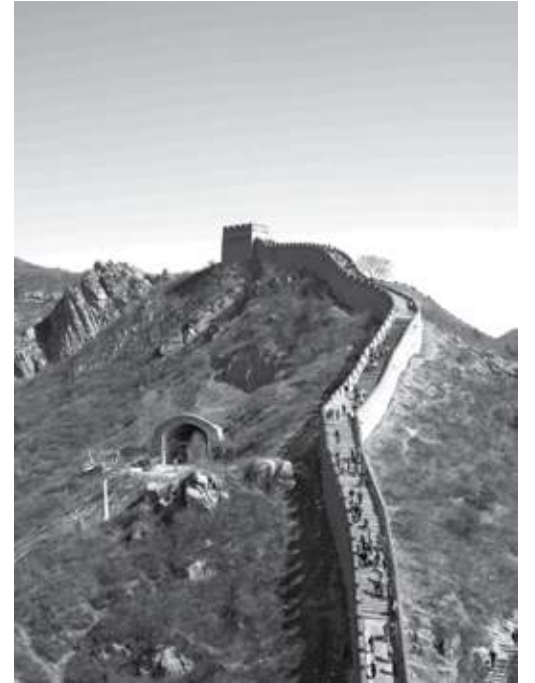
watch, bracelet, purse, journal—no matter what the original price. There was one time when I thought I might have to just walk away rather than spend more than 40 yuan, but as I walked away the sales woman relented. I left the market with several items in tow, proud of my newfound bargaining skills.

I earlier felt like I was back in the United States while enjoying a glass of wine in Shanghai. The local bar wasn't like any found on Saipan. I felt



A man poses in front of Great Hall of the People, where the National People's Congress was in session.

KRISTI EATON



The Great Wall of China.

KRISTI EATON

closer to America while in Shanghai than while on Saipan. I had a similar experience in Beijing. The lamb testicle dinner was enough exotic Chinese food for me for a bit, so I was craving good old American or "Western" food as it's called in the country. I was in luck! There was an Outback restaurant nearby, someone told me. It was about two blocks away, but would take approximately 25 minutes by foot to get there, he said. American food cravings have no limits, so I found myself heading off in search of an Outback restaurant that I hoped existed but weren't entirely sure did. About 20 minutes later, my heart began to beat a little faster when I spotted that red and white sign at the bottom level of the Beijing Hotel. I'd made it! Again, there were



Two people pose for photographs within the grounds of the Forbidden City.

KRISTI EATON

forks and knives, napkins, and refills! Plus, large portions. I was in heaven. I could have sat at that restaurant for hours recharging my Americana batteries, but, unfortunately, that evening had to end early because the next morning I woke up bright and early (5:30!) to head to Tiananmen Square and watch the flag-raising ceremony. Like the Great Wall, something about being in Tiananmen Square seemed surreal. I'd read about it and learned about it for years, but it still seemed too far away. To be standing there listening to the music, watching the people next to me salute and thinking about the area's history was an out-of-body experience.

After the quick flag-raising ceremony, police quickly herded everyone out of the square, as the National People's Congress was in session in the Great Hall of the People (I'd earlier been tuning into the congressional sessions on CNN International in the hotel room).

After four whirlwind days in Beijing, time has come to return to Saipan. I'd like think I'm a little more educated than before I left. If nothing else, I can now cross one life goal off of my list.



Outside the Forbidden City.

KRISTI EATON

Nickelodeon stands by Chris Brown as nominee

NEW YORK (AP)—Nickelodeon said it has no plans to remove Chris Brown as a nominee for its annual Kids' Choice Awards, despite the singer's felony charges for allegedly beating up his girlfriend Rihanna.

Brown is nominated for favorite male singer and favorite song for "Kiss Kiss." Rihanna, who police say was allegedly punched, bitten and choked by Brown in the early morning hours before last month's Grammy Awards, is nominated for best song, too.

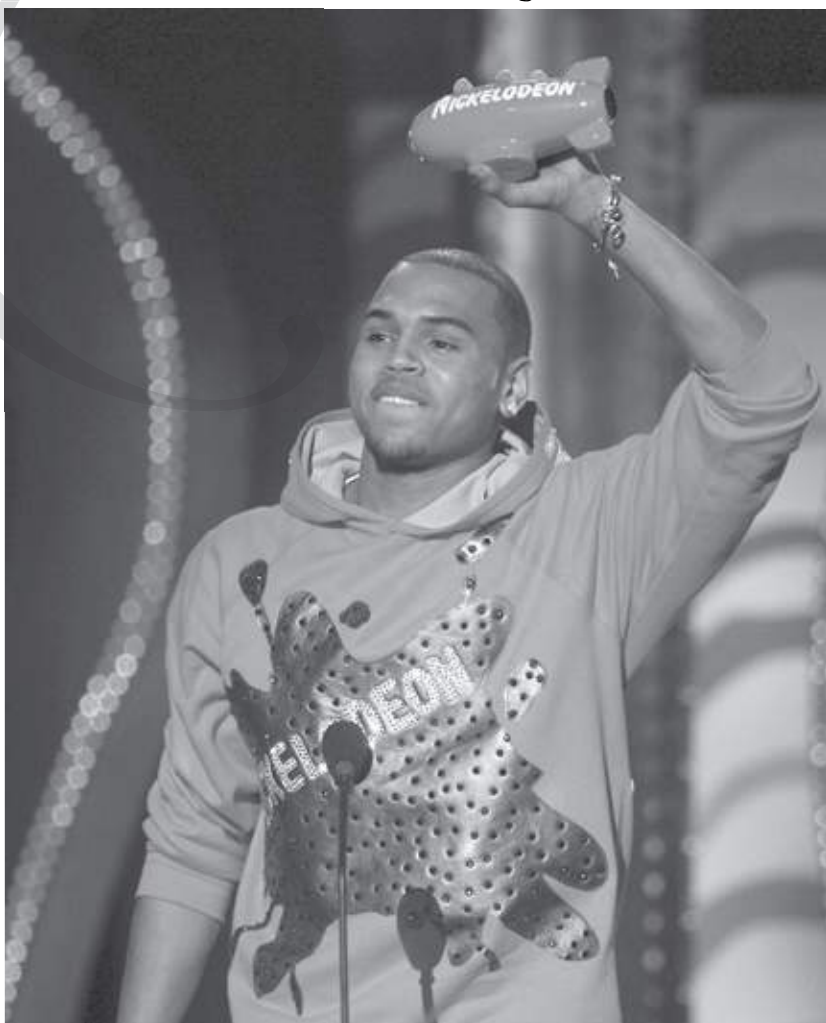
An online petition asking Nickelodeon to remove Brown and Rihanna as nominees had 4,655 signatures Tuesday.

"Like all our KCA nominees, Chris Brown was nominated by kids several months ago based on his body of work as a performer, and the kids who vote will ultimately decide who wins in the category," Dan Martinsen, Nickelodeon spokesman, said.

The awards show is scheduled for March 28. It is usually Nick's biggest event of the year for its youthful audience, and Dwayne Johnson, the former wrestler turned actor, is the host.

In this March 29, 2008 file photo, Chris Brown accepts the award for Favorite Male Singer during the 21st Annual Kids' Choice Awards in Los Angeles.

AP



Akon says he'd work with Chris Brown

WASHINGTON (AP)—Akon—who has gone through legal woes and bad publicity himself—says he'd be willing to work with pop's latest problem child, Chris Brown.

"Oh, absolutely!" Akon said in a phone interview Monday. "I wouldn't take anybody's personal issues or problems. I won't hold them accountable for that when it comes to work. I think it's two separate things."

The 19-year-old R&B singer was charged with two felonies last week in connection with an alleged attack on his girlfriend, pop star Rihanna, 21. Brown is accused of beating her in the early morning hours of Feb. 8, the day of the Grammy Awards. Both were due to perform but bowed out. He was arrested that night.

Since then, a photo has surfaced that purportedly shows a badly beaten



In this Dec. 1, 2008 file photo, Singer Akon attends the premiere of "Cadillac Records" in New York.

Rihanna, and an affidavit released last week offered brutal details of the alleged assault.

Brown has seen endorsements evaporate and some stations have stopped playing the music of the platinum star.

But Akon said it's not fair "to hold his whole career at bay because of it. He's gonna learn and he's gonna move forward and just hopefully he won't treat the next woman the same way."

Akon has been through legal troubles and public relations disasters of his own. He agreed last December to perform community service and pay a fine for throwing a teen off a stage in 2007 after someone in a crowd apparently threw something at him.

He also apologized for simulating sex with a teen at a Trinidadian concert; he said he did not know the girl was so young.

Can NASA take a joke? Try space station Colbert

WASHINGTON (AP)—Earth to Space Station Colbert: The cosmic joke may be on NASA. Comedian Stephen Colbert, who couldn't get his mock presidential campaign off the ground, is polling better by aiming higher. He's convinced his many fans to write in his name in NASA's online public vote to name a new room to be added to the international space station.

So instead of NASA's suggested choices—Serenity, Legacy, Earthrise or Venture—the space station's new addition may wind up with the name "Colbert."

The count by mid-Tuesday had votes for the comedian just shy of 115,000 and Serenity trailing at 98,641. More than 451,000 people have voted.

The to-be-named space station room, currently called Node 3, is scheduled to be delivered to the space station near the end of this year. It will have lots of big windows and a machine that will turn astronauts' urine into drinking water.

The name Colbert doesn't quite fit with NASA's theme, said agency

spokesman John Yembrick. Other U.S. rooms in the international orbiting outpost are named Unity, Harmony and Destiny. However, the space agency hasn't made any decision and voting continues until March 20.

NASA has a legalistic out. Its contest rules say voting results "are not binding on NASA and NASA reserves the right to ultimately select a name" in keeping with its best interests.

Colbert's guest on "The Colbert Report" Tuesday was the strait-laced NASA official in charge of space station operations, William Gerstenmaier. After taping the show, Gerstenmaier wouldn't reveal what he told the comedian but said he had fun "in an engineer way."

Gerstenmaier said the idea behind the contest was to get people excited about space and he held out hope that NASA won't be stuck or have to ignore the vote: "We've got till the 20th of the month.... I'm looking for folks to be creative and think about what they're doing."

And don't cry for Colbert if NASA uses

its regulations to thwart him. He's already managed to get his name attached to an ice cream flavor, a Hungarian bridge and an eagle, to name a few.



In this Sept. 21, 2008 file photo, Stephen Colbert from Comedy Central's "The Colbert Report" is seen in Los Angeles.

Nick said it has gotten hundreds of calls protesting the nomination. Brown was nominated before the incident with Rihanna, and the honor had received little notice until the singer posted a note last week on his Facebook urging his fans to vote for him.

The online petitioners say Brown's name "should have been removed from contention" the moment the charges were filed. Rihanna is named in their petition because she hasn't broken off her relationship with Brown, the petitioners said.

Nickelodeon drew up its list of award nominees from surveys its young viewers completed late last year, the network said. The nominees were announced on Feb. 6—two days before the Grammys.

People can vote through Nick's Web site on the awards as often as they want until shortly before the ceremony airs live in two and a half weeks. Besides Rihanna, Brown is competing with Beyonce and Katy Perry in the best song competition. Other male singer nominees are Jesse McCartney, Kid Rock and T-Pain.

Nick said that whoever gets the most votes in their category wins the award. However, the network doesn't announce the vote totals, so there is no way to independently verify the winners.

Brown isn't the only nominee with a whiff of controversy. Michael Phelps, nominated as favorite male athlete, was photographed smoking from a marijuana pipe last fall.

Shriver says she won't run for office in 2010

FRESNO, Calif. (AP)—After decades in the public eye, California first lady Maria Shriver says she has no intention of running for public office in 2010.

The Democrat said she is too much of a free spirit to be tied to a desk job.

During a stop in Fresno on Tuesday to promote a tax program for low-income Californians, Shriver said she is focused for now on her latest projects, a best-selling book and an HBO special about Alzheimer's disease. She did not expressly rule out a campaign for public office in the future, however.

"I'm not really comfortable in the office. I'm too much of a free spirit," she said in an interview with The Associated Press. "I'm trying to use my entire life experience from being in a public family, my experience as a reporter, and everything else in the work I'm doing right now."

Shriver, a member of the Kennedy political dynasty, said she is not ready to endorse any of the candidates exploring campaigns to replace her husband, Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, who will be termed out of office in January 2011.

The potential Democratic field already is getting crowded, with former governor and current Attorney General Jerry Brown, San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and Lt. Gov. John Garamendi among the better-known politicians considering a run. Former eBay chief executive

Meg Whitman, Insurance Commissioner Steve Poizner and former Rep. Tom Campbell are vying for the GOP gubernatorial nomination.

The seat of U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer also is up next year, but the Democrat is seeking re-election.

Shriver, a former NBC News correspondent, took a leave from the network when Schwarzenegger ran for governor in 2003 and announced she was leaving her job a year later because she could not juggle her work as a journalist with her duties as first lady.

Since his election, Shriver has toured the state to promote her tax program and has made the annual First Lady's Conference on Women and Families her signature event. She also is credited with overhauling the California Museum in downtown Sacramento and, with Schwarzenegger, starting the California Hall of Fame.

Last year, she released a book entitled "Just Who Will You Be?"

"I lost a sense of my identity when I left that job a few years ago," she said, referring to her career in broadcasting. "But this job has turned into a great thing for me. ... I like bringing government to the people."

Shriver's father, Sargent Shriver, was the 1972 Democratic candidate for vice president and she is the niece of President John F. Kennedy.

"I've been in public life my whole life," she said. "I'm on a journey to become myself."



Maria Shriver arrives at The Kennedy Center for a musical birthday salute to Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., Sunday, March 8, 2009, in Washington.

AP

Adam Lambert astonishes 'American Idol' judges

LOS ANGELES (AP)—If the "American Idol" judges have their way, it won't be curtains for Adam Lambert anytime soon. The 26-year-old theater actor from Los Angeles seamlessly impressed the panel—and eclipsed his 12 co-finalists—with an energized rendition of the tune "Black or White" during Tuesday's Michael Jackson-themed performance show.

"You've got the whole package going on," Paula Abdul exclaimed following Lambert's performance.

Anoop Desai, from Chapel Hill, N.C., was the target of the judges' harshest criticism. Randy Jackson said the 21-year-old college student's decision to perform "Beat It" was the "wrong choice" while Simon Cowell declared it "horrible." Jorge Nunez, the 20-year-old college student from Carolina, Puerto Rico, was also targeted for a lackluster song pick.

In defense of his "Never Can Say Goodbye," Nunez said: "I was not going to sing 'Bad' by Michael Jackson."

"Well, you sorta did," Cowell retaliated.

The judges seemed satisfied with most of the evening's other performers, especially Lil Rounds and Danny Gokey, who



The 13 finalists of "American Idol" pose together at the American Idol Top 13 Party in Los Angeles, Thursday, March 5, 2009. Kneeling from left to right are Matt Giraud, Jorge Nunez and Michael Sarver. Standing from left to right are Kris Allen, Jasmine Murray, Adam Lambert, Lil Rounds, Alexis Grace, Anoop Desai, Allison Iraheta, Danny Gokey and Megan Corkrey.

danced around while belting out "Pretty Young Thing." Cowell dubbed Gokey's moves "hid-

eous" but said that his vocals were "brilliant." Jackson said he continued to love Rounds, who

kicked off the show with "The Way You Make Me Feel."

A few of the finalists used

their first time on the main "Idol" stage to showcase their musical abilities. Piano players Matt Giraud from Kalamazoo, Mich., and Scott MacIntyre from Scottsdale, Ariz., tickled the ivories on "Human Nature" and "Keep the Faith," respectively. Kris Allen from Conway, Ark., played his guitar during "Remember the Time."

"You're engaging," Abdul told Allen, "and kinda adorable/sexy."

Voters for final performer Alexis Grace, the 21-year-old single mother from Memphis, Tenn., were directed to 1-866-IDOLS-36. The singing contest—which has 13 finalists this season instead of the usual dozen—used that line because 1-866-IDOLS-13 is owned by a phone sex operation which promises to connect listeners to a "nasty girl" for \$3.99 a minute.

At the beginning of the episode, Cowell announced that two singers—not just one—would be dismissed from the popular Fox singing competition Wednesday. He also later teased that an alteration in the "Idol" structure involving the show's judges would be revealed Wednesday. Host Ryan Seacrest said it will change "the entire theme and concept of the show."

Viewers immediately began speculating online about the possible season-eight switch-up after Tuesday's performance show. The most popular theory: the bottom vote-getters must now "sing for their lives" and the show's judges will have the ability to save a contestant from being sent home.

'Idol' chooses G-rated voting line for its 13th singer

NEW YORK (AP)—

If you want a good time, vote for "American Idol."



Seacrest

The Fox TV show—which has 13 finalists this season instead of the usual dozen—had to choose another voting line besides 1-866-IDOLS-13 because that number is owned by a phone sex operation, promising to connect listeners to a "nasty girl" for up to \$3.99 a minute.

Ryan Seacrest dialed the number on his radio show Tuesday morning. Bemused and appalled, the "American Idol" host said it's as if the show "tried to script some kind of joke."

Seacrest got producer Megan Michaels on the line, and she explained that Tuesday's show will unveil a special G-rated number for the 13th performer. The show owns 1-866-IDOLS-01 to 1-866-IDOLS-12.

Said Michaels: "We will not allude to the fact of the 1-3, because we don't even want to endorse that."

ABC's 'The Bachelor' brings the women

NEW YORK (AP)—Nothing like a broken engagement to goose the TV ratings: ABC milked three prime-time hours out of Jason Resnick's rejection of Melissa Rycroft on "The Bachelor," and all of them made Nielsen Media Research's top 20.

The "After the Final Rose" special, when Resnick had some explaining to do, was the most-watched recap ever in the 13 editions of "The Bachelor." Sensing the result would make for water-cooler conversation, ABC decided a few weeks ago to prepare a second "After the Final Rose" special a day later, a decision that paid off handsomely in the ratings.

Among women aged 18 to 34, that first "After the Final Rose" special was more popular than any show except the Tuesday edition of "American Idol," Nielsen said.

For anyone who didn't follow it—or any men—Resnick dumped Rycroft after realizing he still had feelings for Molly Malaney, the woman who came in second during the matchmaking series.

ABC had twice as many female viewers as men last week: 68 percent to 32 percent, female to male, Nielsen said.

The network had an encouraging sign this Monday night, when the "Dancing With the Stars" new season premiere attracted 22.5 million viewers. That's the most-watched season opener for the program, Nielsen said.

Even though it's March, TV networks were clogged with re-

runs last week.

One prominent exception: CBS' "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation," where an episode with singer Taylor Swift as a guest star was seen by nearly 21 million viewers, the most-watched scripted show of the week.

CBS and Fox finished in a virtual dead heat last week, both averaging 11.2 million prime-time viewers. CBS' rating of 7.0 and 12 share topped Fox (6.5, 11), indicating more CBS viewers were watching alone; Fox dominated among the coveted

18-to-49-year-old demographic.

ABC averaged 8 million viewers last week (5.2 rating, 9 share), NBC had 6 million (3.8, 6), the CW 1.8 million (1.2, 2), My Network TV 1.6 million (1.0, 2) and ION Television 750,000 (0.5, 1).

Among the Spanish-language networks, Univision led with an average of 3.7 million viewers (1.9, 3), Telemundo had 1.1 million (0.6, 1), TeleFutura 680,000 (0.3, 1) and Azteca 160,000 (0.1, 0).

NBC's "Nightly News" continued its evening newscast dominance, averaging 9.4 million viewers (6.2, 12). ABC's "World News" was second with 8.1 million (5.5, 11) and the "CBS Evening News" had 6.4 million viewers (4.4, 9).

A ratings point represents 1,145,000 households, or 1 percent of the nation's estimated 114.5 million TV homes. The share is the percentage of in-use televisions tuned to a given show.

For the week of March 2-8, the top 10 shows, their networks and viewerships: "American Idol" (Tuesday), Fox, 24.31 million; "American Idol," (Wednesday), Fox, 22.78 million; "American Idol" (Thursday), Fox, 21.5 million; "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation," CBS, 20.88 million; "The Bachelor: After the Final Rose," ABC, 17.47 million; "The Bachelor," ABC, 15.48 million; "Two and a Half Men," CBS, 15.47 million; "NCIS," CBS, 13.67 million; "Desperate Housewives," ABC, 13.65 million; "CSI: Miami," CBS, 13.42 million.



In this image released by ABC, Jason Mesnick, right, is shown with Molly Malaney on the season finale of "The Bachelor," airing Monday, March 2, 2009 on ABC. Mesnick, a 32-year-old single dad, proposed to Melissa Rycroft on the ABC reality dating show. But in the subsequent "After the Final Rose" special, taped six weeks after Mesnick's proposal, he told Rycroft he was dumping her because he still had feelings for the runner-up, Molly Malaney.

HBO, Mormons square off over airing of a sacred rite

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—HBO on Tuesday defended its plans to depict a sacred Mormon temple ceremony in an upcoming episode of "Big Love."

The drama about a Utah polygamous family will show an endowment ceremony Sunday.

HBO said it did not intend to be disrespectful of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and apologized.

"Obviously, it was not our intention to do anything disrespectful to the church, but to those who may be offended, we offer our sincere apology," the premium cable channel said in a statement issued Tuesday.

But the ceremony is an important part of the "Big Love" story line, HBO said.

In the scene, actress Jeanne Tripplehorn's character, Barb, goes through the endowment ceremony as she faces losing her membership in the Mormon church.

On Monday, Mormon church leaders criticized HBO for its decision to include the ceremony and said airing the material shows the insensitivity of the network's writers, producers and executives.

"Certainly church members

are offended when their most sacred practices are misrepresented or presented without context or understanding," the church statement said.

Only church members in good standing can enter temples to perform or witness sacred ceremonies. The ceremonies are centered on religious teachings and re-enactments of Bible stories to help Mormons prepare an eternal place for themselves—and others by proxy—in heaven.

Members take a vow not to discuss the rituals outside temple walls, although details of the ceremonies are widely available on the Internet.

The dramatization of the ceremony was vetted for accuracy by an adviser familiar with temple ceremonies who was on set during filming, said series creators and executives producers Mark V. Olsen and Will Scheffer.

"In approaching the dramatization of the endowment ceremony, we knew we had a responsibility to be completely accurate and to show the ceremony in the proper context and with respect," Olsen and Scheffer said in a separate statement issued through HBO.

Coolio charged with cocaine possession, battery

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Prosecutors in Los Angeles say Coolio has been charged with cocaine possession.

The 45-year-old rapper, whose real name is Artis Leon Ivey, was also charged Tuesday with battery stemming from his Friday arrest at Los Angeles International Airport. Authorities say he grabbed a screener's arm to prevent a luggage search that turned up the drugs.

Ivey was charged with one felony count of possession, and one misdemeanor count each of battery and possession of paraphernalia. He was released on \$10,000 bail and is scheduled for arraignment April 3.

A message left for manager Susan Haber was not immediately returned Tuesday. Ivey faces up to three years prison if convicted.

The rapper gained fame for his 1995 single "Gangsta's Paradise."

In this July 20, 2008 file photo, rapper Coolio poses on the press line at the "NBC Universal 2008 Press Tour All-Star Party" in Beverly Hills, Calif.

AP



Leno to give free show for Michigan's unemployed

AUBURN HILLS, Mich. (AP)—Michigan's high unemployment is no laughing matter, but Jay Leno will offer a little comic relief with a free show next month at the Palace of Auburn Hills.

The "Tonight" host said on his Monday show that the April 7 performance will be for "anybody out of work in Detroit."

Refreshments and parking also will be free.

People only have to say they are unemployed to get tickets to the event. Tickets will be available starting Monday at the Pal-



ace box office. Four tickets will be allowed per person.

Some on the Detroit City Council on Tuesday questioned why Leno's show was in the suburbs. They want him to move it into the city.

Michigan's unemployment rate has been among the highest in the nation. It was at 11.6 percent in January.

In this Feb. 22, 2009 file photo, Jay Leno arrives at the Vanity Fair Oscar party in West Hollywood, Calif.

AP

ENTERTAINMENT TIDBITS

Hulk Hogan asks Fla. court for funds to pay bills

CLEARWATER, Fla. (AP)—Hulk Hogan's lawyers have asked a judge to grant the former professional wrestler access to some of his funds that were frozen while his pending divorce is resolved. Attorneys for Hogan, whose real name is Terry Bollea, filed documents Monday asking that he be given \$300,000 from the frozen assets. In December, Linda Bollea was granted \$400,000 to pay attorneys' fees. Hogan claims back surgery he had last month will keep him from working for a time. The motion said he has nearly \$411,000 in his bank account and his bills top \$312,000. A hearing is scheduled Thursday on the issue.

Bill Clinton to speak at publishers gathering

NEW YORK (AP)—Bill Clinton will be sharing a few thoughts with the nation's publishers. The former president—and million-selling author—is scheduled

Wednesday to make a brief speech at the annual meeting of the Association of American Publishers. The topic will be education. Clinton, the husband of Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, has appeared before the book community before. In 2004, he was the keynote speaker at BookExpo America, the industry's annual national convention. Clinton was promoting the upcoming release of "My Life," which went on to sell more than 1 million copies.

David Mamet's 'Race' opens on B'way in December

NEW YORK (AP)—David Mamet will be back on Broadway next season, this time with a new play called "Race." Producer Jeffrey Richards says the play goes into rehearsal Oct. 26, with the first preview set for Nov. 20 and an opening scheduled for Dec. 10. Richards declined to talk about "Race" but said, "The title is self-explanatory." No casting, design team or theater were announced. Richards is present-

ing "Race" with Jerry Frankel and Steve Traxler, who were associated with him on several other Mamet projects including this season's revival of "Speed-the-Plow."

Publisher pays big for Niffenegger's 2nd novel

NEW YORK (AP)—In a time of cost-cutting in the publishing industry, wallets opened wide for a long-awaited second novel. Audrey Niffenegger's "Her Fearful Symmetry," her first book since the million-selling "The Time Traveler's Wife," has been acquired by Scribner and will be published in September, spokesman Brian Belfiglio said Tuesday. The advance was at least \$4 million, according to two publishing officials with knowledge of the negotiations. They declined to be named, saying they were not authorized to discuss financial details. Virtually all of the major publishers had bid for the novel, the story of twin American girls who live near a cemetery in London. "Time Traveler's Wife,"

Boyd, 'I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa' singer, dies

SANTA MONICA, Calif. (AP)—Jimmy Boyd, the child singer and actor best known for the original rendition of the Christmas novelty hit "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus" in 1952, has died. He was 70.

Boyd died of cancer Saturday at a Santa Monica convalescent hospital, longtime friend Eleanor Pillsbury said Tuesday.

"I Saw Mommy" shot to the top of the Billboard charts three weeks after it was released. It sold 2 million records in less than 10 weeks. It has since been interpreted by such artists as the Jackson 5, John Mellencamp and Amy Winehouse.

Boyd, who was 13 when he recorded the song, told Time magazine soon after its release that he was surprised by its success.

"I like it personally," he said, "but I didn't think anyone would buy it."

Boyd was born in McComb, Miss., on Jan. 9, 1939, and grew up on a ranch near Los Angeles' San Fernando Valley, where he started playing guitar at age 4. After winning a TV talent contest, Boyd appeared on "The Frank Sinatra Show" and was signed to a recording contract with Columbia.

His first recording success was with a country song, "(The Angels Are Lighting) God's Little Candles." Later hits included "Dennis the Menace," sung with Rosemary Clooney, and several duets with Frankie Laine.

Old-fashioned fashion enjoys a comeback: skirts for men

DEAR ABBY: Allow me to offer kudos to "Joe in Pennsylvania" (Dec. 31), who wrote that he prefers wearing skirts at home, on errands and at church. I grew up in southwestern Asia where skirts, sarongs and robes are common daily apparel for men. I have been somewhat surprised by the disapproving looks and downright hostility I have encountered in this country any time I have chosen to leave my home wearing anything other than pants.



Dear Abby

I look forward to a day when more people in the USA recognize that pants are a relatively new phenomenon in the world. Men who prefer skirts as a mode of dress are not all weirdos or terrorists.

So, congratulations to Joe, who has not only the fortitude to wear what he pleases, but also to his family members, community and church members for respecting that choice.

KARL, KILT SUPPORTER IN FLORIDA

DEAR KARL: I heard from men and women across the United States and beyond who wrote supporting Joe in his decision to wear skirts. Many of them suggested he contact Utilikilts, a company based in Seattle, which manufactures a line of kilts for the modern man. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: To Joe's jackass relatives who start rumors about him because he wears skirts for comfort, I have one word for him: "Utilikilt." They are made in all sorts of different styles and fabrics—from work kilts to fancy dress kilts—and they are male-specific. Plus he can then use my favorite kilt joke: "You know why they're called 'kilts'? Because if ye call 'em 'skirts,' ye'll be kilt."

ANN FROM KANSAS CITY, MO.

DEAR ABBY: Three cheers to Joe and to you for your answer regarding his wearing skirts. While skirts may not be appropriate for riding a horse or motorcycle riding, they make perfect sense as casual attire, potentially even business attire.

I find it interesting that women have won the "right" to wear pants at will, and their sexuality is not questioned. However, when a man dons a skirt, his masculinity falls under suspicion, unless he's wearing a kilt and is involved in macho activities. Then the question most asked becomes, "What are you wearing under that?" My reply to that question is, "Do you ask that of women wearing skirts?"

RAY IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR ABBY: I had a good laugh after reading the letter from Joe. My husband dresses exclusively in kilts throughout the summer, much of the winter and whenever he works for my designing business. If someone calls his kilt a skirt, he smiles and tells them, "It's only a skirt if I'm wearing pumps with it." A good chuckle generally diffuses any discomfort of bystanders.

Good luck, Joe. I hope you continue to set fashion rather than to follow it.

A KILTER'S WIFE

DEAR ABBY: Someone should send Joe's family to American Samoa and see if they will still snicker at the men. We grow NFL linebackers here, and they all wear "skirts." The Samoan lavalava is a wraparound "skirt" worn by Polynesian men and hardly a girlish trend.

AMUSED IN SAMOA

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$6 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby—Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS. EVERY DAY I GET ALL MY HOPES UP, THINKING MY BEANIE WILL COME... AND THEN IT DOESN'T.

AND FOR EACH DAY THAT GOES BY, I FIGURE THE ODDS ARE BETTER THAT IT WILL COME THE NEXT DAY, SO MY HOPES GET HIGHER AND HIGHER BEFORE THEY FALL. IT'S ANFUL.

Garfield®

WHY THE SAD FACE, MISTER?

YOU'VE GOT IT ALL! GOOD LOOKS, PERSONALITY...

BURP

...TUNA BREATH

Adam@home

YOU HAVE TO GET READY. THE WEDDING'S IN AN HOUR.

WHAT WEDDING?

THE ONE I'M ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT.

LUKE AND LAURA?

NO, IRIS. MY CO-WORKER.

OH-NO. A CO-WORKER WEDDING? THOSE ARE AWFUL.

HER FIANCE'S FAMILY OWNS MARIO'S DELI AND THEY'RE CATERING.

"AWFULLY FUN," THAT IS!

The Duplex

I GREW UP IN A VERY UNTRADITIONAL HOUSEHOLD. MY MOM WORE THE PANTS IN OUR FAMILY.

WHICH IS WHY DAD GOT ARRESTED A LOT.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Rhyming tributes

5 — de deux

8 Satiated

12 Mentor

13 Killer whale

14 Possess

15 Hideaway

16 Harry's successor

17 Terrible fellow?

18 Football team

20 Baseball team

22 Placing first, second, or third

26 Jobs in technology?

29 Mound stat

30 Decorate Easter eggs

31 Dorothy's destination

32 Soar

33 Warmth

34 Acapulco gold?

35 Benicio — Toro

36 Lan- guage of Iran

37 Exactly right

40 "The Music Man" locale

41 Make bubbly

45 Isinglass

47 Back talk

49 Concept

50 Stench

51 Lamb's mama

52 Pub missile

53 Frogs' hangout

54 "May-day!"

55 Messes up

DOWN

1 Look

2 Two-way

3 One of HOMES

4 Last

5 Hunting dogs

6 "Evan Almighty" construction

7 Land-scapes

8 Pants material

9 Pale purple

10 Eggs

11 Longing

19 Compass dir.

21 "— Little Teapot"

23 Greeting

24 Nestling hawk

25 Himala-yan beast

26 "Scat!"

27 Ripped

28 Smiley in an e-mail, e.g.

32 Cows and sows

33 Rural outing

35 Morning moisture

36 Doctor's due

38 Stockpile

39 Scruffs

42 Hebrew month

43 Yukon, for ex.

44 Corrodes

45 Swab the deck

46 Altar affirmative

48 — Jima

Solution time: 25 mins.

Yesterday's answer 3-12

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Darryl Strawberry, 47; James Taylor, 61; Liza Minnelli, 63; Barbara Feldon, 77

Happy Birthday: Lots of doors will open this year if you do things a little differently. Your creative input and attitude will get everyone on board with you. Once you realize you don't have to go it alone, you will excel. Use your Pisces charm and flair and your personal and professional lives will take a turn upward. Your numbers are 6, 9, 15, 24, 32, 34, 46

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Nurture partnerships of all kinds in order to get the most from each encounter. Mingling and getting along with others will allow you to break new ground for future dealings. Love is in the stars. ★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Keep things simple, to the point and cost-efficient and you will score points. Use your voice as a tool to persuade others to help you. A strong figure in your life will guide you with his or her expertise. ★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Use your Gemini ingenuity to mastermind whatever needs to be done to make things unfold the way you want. There is money to be made and, by mixing business with pleasure, you can network yourself into a good position. ★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Don't confuse your personal feelings with your professional needs. It's important to see situations clearly in order to make the best decision. Consider all facets of each situation rather than impulsively declining. ★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Travel, socializing and getting to know someone you love that much better will all be to your advantage. Be prepared to take a walk down memory lane and learn from the experiences you have already encountered. ★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You are better off throwing your efforts behind your work. Talk is fine but, if action isn't taken, all the words will be wasted and your reputation hurt. Don't spend because you are depressed or want to win someone's affection. ★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You will have to hold things together, even if you are a little emotionally fragile. Social events and activities that will help you bring about change will lead to some great friendships. Be an innovative and imaginative leader. ★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Lean toward the unusual and pull in from resources that most would never think to use. You will surprise everyone with your clearcut vision and ability to pull things together. Don't let someone else's bragging upset your plans or your world. ★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Love and romance are looking very good if you plan an intimate evening for two. Don't give in to someone trying to upset your plans. You will learn something new that may leave you questioning what you really want. ★★

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Do not let any emotional matter or love issue interfere with what you need to

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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accomplish. A trip will cost more or lead to emotional turmoil that you should be trying to avoid. Don't fall for someone who is trying to take advantage of you. ★★

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You are ready, determined and able to make a difference as long as you do so without brute force. If you talk constructively about your plans, you can get others to jump on board and help you finish what you started. ★★

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Keep a tight lid on what you are trying to do. It will be the element of surprise that will be the talk of the town. Your insight will help you make the right choices. A love issue is likely to arise, so prepare to talk matters through. ★★

Birthday Baby: You are engaging, entertaining and can entice anyone to help you. You are creative, aggressive and obsessive.

Eugenia's Web sites: astroadvice.com for fun, eugenialast.com for confidential consultations

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

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53 54 55

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

Difficulty Level ★★★★★ 3/13

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

Difficulty Level ★★★ 3/11

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

WONDERWORD By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

DAUGHTERS Solution: 6 letters

N W D E Z I R P C L O S E J

M O M E N T S F A T H E R O H

E M I C A I M A E R D I Y E O

M A R T U K L I F E F L S N

O N G A O T A I S C U P P D E

R G N S W M E R O L F S U D Y

Y U I V E R E M U U T W R I N

T I R F A W P F L O V E E S O

R D P H O L T F E R H E L C I

O E S L E H U F D T I T T I T

P G F X G T A E O N L G N P C

P N F U U M O M S A O E E L E

U A O R I N L A W F R B G I F

S H E L T E R C O N C E R N F

T C Y T I T N E D I C A R E A

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Affection, Angel, Bond, Care, Change, Child, Close, Complex, Concern, Cute, Dear, Discipline, Dream, Emotion, Family, Father, Female, Flowers, Future, Gentle, Girl, Guide, Helpful, Honey, Identity, Infant, In-law, Joyful, Kind, Life, Love, Memory, Moments, Moms, Mother, Offspring, Prized, Pure, Share, Shelter, Support, Sweet, Thoughtful, Value, Warm, Woman

Yesterday's Answer: Cayenne

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Date of Birth : Mar. 23, 1972
Passport No. : 141261109
Contact No. : 233-8899

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- 3-Liner with picture
- 5-Liner with picture

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\$35
\$45
\$55

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235- NEWS

Netherlands topples Dominican Republic



SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)—Stunned twice by a pesky Netherlands team, the Dominican Republic is done at the World Baseball Classic.

Eugene Kingsale singled in the tying run and scored the game-winner in the 11th inning Tuesday night as the Netherlands rallied for a 2-1 victory over the heavily favored Dominicans, earning a surprise spot in the second round.

After an error by first baseman Willy Aybar allowed the winning run to score, Netherlands players rushed out of the dugout and piled all over each other in a raucous celebration that resembled a World Series finale.

Jose Reyes, Robinson Cano and other Dominican stars slumped quietly in the dugout, staring ahead in shock.

"This is a miracle. The Dominican Republic is one of the best teams in the world," Netherlands manager Rod Delmonico said with tears in his eyes. "It is difficult to describe what took place. These kids have fought for three days. I have never had a team with this much passion."

It was the second time in four days that a Netherlands squad made up of little-known players upset the Dominican Republic, considered one of the favorites coming into the 16-team tournament thanks to a roster filled with major league All-Stars.

Even without injured Alex Rodriguez, the Dominicans featured David Ortiz, Hanley Ramirez, Miguel Tejada and Pedro Martinez, just to name a few. But in two games they couldn't solve an unheralded Netherlands pitching staff coached by former big leaguer Bert Blyleven.

Netherlands players were still on the field celebrating 15 minutes after the game ended.

The Dominican Republic reached the semifinals of the inaugural WBC in 2006, and a first-round exit in Group D this time seemed almost unimaginable a few days ago.

Then, the Netherlands won 3-2 in the teams' tournament opener Saturday. The Dominican Republic bounced back for a 9-0 victory Sunday over Panama, but was stymied again Tuesday night before a pro-Dominican crowd of 11,814 at Hiram Bithorn Stadium.

The Netherlands (2-1) will face Puerto Rico (2-0) on Wednesday for first place in Group D. Puerto Rico needed a late rally to win the first game between the teams, 3-1 on Monday. Both clubs begin second-round play Saturday in Miami.

"Tonight we are going to try to rest, even though it will be difficult with all the emotion," Delmonico said.

Tuesday night's game was scoreless until the 11th inning, when Kingsale misplayed Jose Bautista's two-out liner to right for an error that let the speedy Reyes score all the way from first base.

Reyes, who had walked, clapped his hands emphatically as he slid across the plate.

Leon Boyd struck out Hanley Ramirez to end the inning, though, and the Netherlands wasn't finished.

Pinch-hitter Sidney de Jong doubled to start the bottom half against Chicago Cubs reliever Carlos Marmol. A groundout by pinch-hitter Curt Smith moved de Jong to third, and he scored on Kingsale's single to right.

Marmol then uncorked a wild pickoff throw that caromed toward the right-field line and allowed de Jong to reach third.

After Sharlon Schoop struck out, Randall Simon was intentionally walked and Yurendell DeCaster slapped a one-hopper toward the first-base line that could have been handled by Aybar. But it glanced off his glove and rolled away into foul territory as Kingsale raced toward the plate.

Aybar retrieved the ball, spun and threw to Marmol covering first, but it was too late. DeCaster beat the play with a feet first slide to the bag, then popped up and jumped into the arms of a teammate.

"I am very proud of the work we have done," DeCaster said. "I agree that this is a team with



Netherlands' pitcher Tom Stuifbergen, top, celebrates with his catcher, no name available, after defeating the Dominican Republic 2-1 in the eleventh inning of a World Baseball Classic game in San Juan, Tuesday, March 10, 2009.

a lot of confidence, but I expect us to be even stronger in the next Classic."

Boyd earned the win to go with his save on Saturday against the Dominican Republic. Marmol took the loss.

Dominican Republic starter Ubaldo Jimenez set a tournament record with 10 strikeouts in four innings. The previous mark was eight by Japanese pitcher Koji Uehara on in 2006 against South Korea.

"We have a solid defense," Delmonico said. "We know that we need to keep on working on our offense, but this team has a lot of confidence."

Venezuela 10, Italy 1

At Toronto, Bobby Abreu and Miguel Cabrera hit consecutive long balls to start a four-homer outburst in the fifth inning that powered Venezuela to victory over Italy and a spot in the second round of the World Baseball Classic.

Jose Lopez added a two-run shot, Ramon Hernandez followed with a mammoth drive and Venezuela eliminated Italy from the 16-team tournament with its second win over the Italians in four days.

Venezuela will play the United States on Wednesday night to decide the winner of Group C. The U.S. won their previous matchup 15-6 on Sunday night. Both teams begin second-round play Saturday in Miami.

Italy beat host Canada 6-2 on Monday night but couldn't follow that up in front of a pro-Ven-

ezuelan crowd of 10,450.

Cabrera, who came in 0-for-9 in the WBC, went 3-for-4 with a walk and scored twice.

Cabrera wasn't available to reporters after the game, but Abreu said an improved approach helped the Detroit slugger end his hitless skid.

"The first two games he was swinging the bat a little too aggressive," Abreu said. "Today he was more patient at the plate, he drove the ball up the middle and the other way. He got pretty good contact. That's what we need."

Cuba 5, Australia 4

At Mexico City, Yosbany Peraza hit a two-run home run in the eighth inning and Cuba reached the second round of the World Baseball Classic with a victory over Australia.

Cuba trailed 4-3 heading into the eighth before Peraza's pinch-hit homer off Richard Thompson.

Yoennis Cespedes hit a solo homer for Cuba, which is 2-0 in Group B of the 16-team tournament and will face South Korea or Japan when the next round starts March 15 in San Diego.

Aroldis Chapman struck out seven and allowed one run over four innings, and Ismel Jimenez earned the win with 2 2-3 shutout innings.

Australia faces Mexico on Wednesday to determine who will join Cuba in the second round. The winner will play Cuba for first place in Group B on Thursday.

MLB BRIEFS

Report: Substances found on Clemens materials

NEW YORK (AP)—Federal authorities have found performance-enhancing substances on the materials Brian McNamee said he used to inject Roger Clemens, The New York Times reported Tuesday. McNamee turned over the syringes, vials and gauze pads to federal investigators last year, after he told baseball investigator George Mitchell he injected the pitcher with steroids and human growth hormone. The Washington Post reported Feb. 6 that tests linked Clemens' DNA to blood in the syringes given to investigators by McNamee. Clemens has said repeatedly that McNamee, his former personal trainer, injected him with B-12 and the painkiller lidocaine. "I assumed, and I am not surprised, that the tests were positive for both DNA and for performance-enhancing drugs, because that's what Brian said all along, and there's not much doubt that Brian's been telling the truth," McNamee's lawyer, Richard Emery, told The Associated Press. "The confirmation of that fact, once again, just seems to me to be another significant step towards jail for Clemens." A federal grand jury in Washington is investigating whether Clemens lied when he told a congressional committee last year that he didn't use illegal performance-enhancing substances. McNamee, testifying before the same committee, said he repeatedly injected Clemens with steroids and HGH. Rusty Hardin, Clemens' lawyer, did not return a telephone call seeking comment.

Cashman not optimistic about trade for fill-in 3B

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—Yankees general manager Brian Cashman thinks he's unlikely to acquire a fill-in third baseman to replace Alex Rodriguez. "I'm not optimistic about doing anything," Cashman said before the Yankees played Cincinnati on Tuesday night. "I'm not going to be proactive in trying to do something. If something represents itself that makes sense, then maybe it will be different. I think our answer is here in camp." Rodriguez had arthroscopic surgery Monday to repair torn cartilage in his right hip, and doctors said they found nothing that would keep him from returning to the lineup in May. The top internal candidate to start opening day at third is Cody Ransom, who has seven home runs and 24 RBIs in six major league seasons. Cashman said he has not spoken to any other general manager about a third baseman, but he has heard from the agents of some free agents. Cashman expects the three-time AL MVP back on the field in May. Rodriguez will need a more extensive operation after the season. Dr. Marc Philippon, who operated in Vail, Colo., predicted Rodriguez will "absolutely" be ready for spring training in 2010. Rodriguez is expected to spend a few weeks rehabilitating in Colorado, then will return to the Yankees' spring training complex in Florida when he is ready for baseball drills.

Manny to make spring training debut Thursday

PHOENIX (AP)—Manny Ramirez is scheduled to make his spring training debut Thursday when the Los Angeles Dodgers play South Korea's World Baseball Classic team. The exhibition game won't count in Cactus League standings, but Ramirez's return to the Dodgers after agreeing to a \$45 million, two-year contract last week will make it a major attraction. Los Angeles manager Joe Torre said Tuesday he isn't sure if Ramirez will play the outfield or be the designated hitter, but the slugger will get a start on the 50 or so at-bats he's expected to receive before opening day. "With the veterans, I usually go back to the old press guides to see (how many at-bats) they've had in the past," Torre said. "You just want to make sure they are comfortable." Ramirez has been showing up at 6 a.m. each day since he arrived in camp, lifting weights in full uniform before most of his teammates check in for the day. "I'm behind, so I have to catch up," said Ramirez, who planned to be in camp Wednesday while his teammates get a day off. "I'm going to run the bases and lift and do what I need to do. I'm still sore, but it's getting better day by day. I'm still getting used to wearing (spikes) again. But I'm ready to see how I do."

Jazz beat Pacers for 12th straight win



INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Mehmet Okur scored 24 points and the Utah Jazz beat the Indiana Pacers 112-100 on Tuesday night for their 12th straight victory.

Paul Millsap finished with 22 points and nine rebounds, Ronnie Brewer scored 18 points and Deron Williams had 12 assists for the Jazz (41-23), who moved closer to the franchise record of 15 consecutive victories.

Troy Murphy scored 23 points and tied a Pacers home record with seven 3-pointers. He also grabbed 13 rebounds, while Jarrett Jack and T.J. Ford each added 21 points for Indiana.

The Pacers, who trailed by two entering the fourth quarter, tied the score at 90 on Ford's jumper with 7 minutes left. The Jazz answered with a 16-4 run over the next three minutes to open a double-digit lead.

Despite committing 14 turnovers in the first half and trailing by as many as 12 points, the Pacers managed to stay within 54-48 at the intermission. Murphy had 21 points in the opening half and hit seven of eight 3-point attempts.

Indiana jumped ahead, 61-58, on Jack's two free throws early in the third quarter, but the Jazz regained a seven-point lead minutes later on Brewer's dunk. Jack's jumper to end the period brought the Pacers within 82-80.

Mavericks 122, Suns 117

At Phoenix, Dirk Nowitzki scored 23 of his 34 points in the second half and Dallas beat Phoenix to widen its lead over the Suns for the final

playoff spot in the Western Conference.

The Suns lost their season-

worst fifth in a row to fall five games behind the Mavericks, with 18 to play, for the eighth

playoff berth in the West.

Jason Terry added 25 points and Jose Barea 16 for Dallas.



Utah Jazz center Mehmet Okur, left, of Turkey, is fouled by Indiana Pacers center Roy Hibbert in the second half of an NBA basketball game in Indianapolis, Tuesday, March 10, 2009.

L.T. reworks deal to give Chargers some cap relief



SAN DIEGO (AP)—The Lardainian Tomlinson saga ended happily for both sides. After two months of uncertainty about his future, L.T. remains the face of the San Diego Chargers. The star running back agreed to a renegotiated deal that gives the team salary cap relief, the Chargers confirmed Tuesday night.

Financial terms weren't immediately available for the three-year contract for Tomlinson, the 2006 NFL MVP.

"I love San Diego and being a part of this team with my teammates," Tomlinson said in a statement released by the team. "My No. 1 priority was to stay here in San Diego. I truly believe this is the place that gives me the best chance to be successful and win a championship. I want to finish the job we started when I got here eight years ago. My heart has always been in San Diego. I couldn't imagine putting on another uniform."

A news conference was sched-

uled for Wednesday morning.

General manager A.J. Smith, who came under fire in late January for mocking a statement Tomlinson made about wanting to stay in San Diego, sounded relieved that the process was over.

"I'm just very happy that he's back," Smith told The Associated Press. "The way I'm looking at it, L.T. has helped us on the field and now he's gone a step further and he's helped us off the field."

"I felt comfortable that it had a chance," Smith said. "We wanted him back, he wanted to come back. Everything was as smooth as it can be in negotiations."

Team president Dean Spanos knew how important this deal was.

"This is a good day for the Chargers and for Chargers fans," Spanos said in a statement. "It was important to me to get this done so L.T. could continue his career here in San Diego where he means so much to our team, our fans and our

community. The alternative was just unthinkable. He belongs in San Diego."

Tomlinson had been due \$24 million over the next three seasons, including \$6,725,000 in 2009. His salary cap number would have been \$8.8 million in 2009, including a prorated share of the signing bonus from his 2004 contract.

Tomlinson was slowed during the regular season with a toe injury, then hurt his groin in the season finale. He was forced out of an overtime playoff win against the Indianapolis Colts and sat out against the Steelers, the first game he'd missed due to injury in his brilliant eight-year career.

It was the second straight year his postseason was cut short by injury. That, coupled with the fact Tomlinson turns 30 this summer, raised questions about how long he would be a Charger. The team said it needed salary cap relief in order to sign other players to contract extensions, and it zeroed in on

Tomlinson's deal.

While his 1,110 yards rushing were the lowest of his brilliant eight-year career, Tomlinson still finished fourth in the AFC and 10th in the NFL.

The new deal came three weeks after the Chargers put the non-exclusive franchise tag on Darren Sproles, virtually assuring the speedy little running back/returner will be back next season. If Sproles and the Chargers don't negotiate a long-term deal, he'll make \$6.62 million next year.

Smith wouldn't divulge the renegotiated terms. Tomlinson's deal, signed in 2004, was heavily backloaded, with salaries of \$8 million in 2010 and \$9,275,000 in 2011, the deal's final year.

Players often receive a bonus for agreeing to lower their salaries in renegotiations. There also had been speculation a new deal would include incentives.

"We have cap relief, and now we have the opportunity over the next couple of years to ad-

Shaquille O'Neal scored 21 on 9-of-10 shooting for Phoenix to pass Elvin Hayes for sixth on the NBA's career scoring list. Steve Nash had 23 points and 13 assists for the Suns. Matt Barnes added 21 points.

Cavaliers 87, Clippers 83

At Los Angeles, LeBron James recorded his second straight triple-double with 32 points, 13 rebounds and 11 assists, Mo Williams hit a go-ahead 3-pointer with 6.6 seconds to play, and Cleveland rallied from a 19-point, fourth-quarter deficit.

James, last season's NBA scoring champ, recorded his 22nd career triple-double, scoring his final 10 points in the frenetic fourth quarter and recording his 800th career steal. The Cavaliers' 11th victory in 13 games increased their lead over Boston in the Eastern Conference to 1 1/2 games.

Al Thornton and Zach Randolph each had 20 points for the Clippers. They used their 30th different starting lineup, with center Chris Kaman returning after to action after missing 48 games because of plantar fasciitis in his left foot.

Spurs 100, Bobcats 86

At San Antonio, Tim Duncan had 18 points and 11 rebounds, and San Antonio stopped Charlotte's franchise-record winning streak at six.

Tony Parker and Roger Mason added 21 points apiece for the Spurs, who couldn't shake the Bobcats until late before ending Charlotte's recent surge that pushed the Bobcats into the playoff picture.

Raja Bell and Emeka Okafor each had 16 points for the Bob-

cats, who are a game behind eighth-place Chicago in their bid to make the playoffs for the first time since joining the NBA in the 2004-05 season.

Knicks 120, Bucks 112

At Milwaukee, Nate Robinson scored 10 of his 32 points in the final five minutes, helping New York beat Milwaukee for a rare road victory.

Larry Hughes added a season-high 39 for the Knicks, who have won only eight road games all season. With Tuesday's victory, New York also managed to prevent Milwaukee from its first sweep of the season series since 1990-91.

Charlie Villanueva scored 32 for the Bucks, who came into Tuesday's game trying to cling to the final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference despite a season filled with significant injuries.

Thunder 99, Kings 98

At Sacramento, Calif., Jeff Green and Russell Westbrook each scored 24 points, and Oklahoma City held on for its fifth victory in six games.

Thabo Sefolosha had 17 points for the Thunder. Malik Rose scored 11 points and Nenad Krstic added nine points and 15 rebounds.

Spencer Hawes had 20 points, 10 rebounds and five assists for the Kings. Francisco Garcia made four 3-pointers and scored 18, Andres Nocioni had 16 points and seven rebounds, and Rashad McCants added 13 points. Kevin Martin, the Kings' leading scorer, was on the bench in the game's final 15 minutes and scored 12 points.

chise's most brutally honest employee, confirmed he had a detached tendon in his groin while the team said only that he had a strained groin.

In late January, Smith mocked a statement Tomlinson posted on his Web site, in which he said he wanted to stay in San Diego, mimicking the star's comments practically word for word. Smith later said he regretted making the comment.

Tomlinson was voted the NFL MVP in 2006, when he set league records with 31 touchdowns - 28 rushing - and 186 points. He also won the first of two straight league rushing titles with a career-high 1,815 yards.

A five-time Pro Bowler, Tomlinson owns or shares 28 team records. The NFL's 14th all-time leading rusher with 11,760 yards, he ranks second all-time in rushing touchdowns (126) and is tied for fourth in total touchdowns (141).

He was the NFL's Walter Payton Man of the Year in 2006 for his work in the community.

NMC caps regular season with win

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER



Northern Marianas College played its last game in the regular season of the women's division of the 2008-2009 Inter-Government/Business Slow-pitch Softball League and whipped Commonwealth Utilities Corp., 8-1, Tuesday at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

NMC ended the regular season with a 10-2 record to keep the No. 1 seed in the playoffs.

The CUC-NMC game was actually scheduled for Feb. 27, but was reset due to a conflict of schedule.

In the make-up match, NMC allowed CUC to score only at the top of the fourth inning with Bobby Norita reaching home plate on a Dolorina Pan-

uelo single.

NMC scored the first run of the game with Joyce Taro making it home on shortstop Jenny Palacios error. NMC went cold in the next two innings before it scored four runs in the fourth and three at the bottom of the sixth, capitalizing on CUC's fielding errors.

CUC absorbed its fifth loss in 11 games, dropping the team from second to third place in the team standings.

MEN'S CHC 13, Jets 6

In the first make-up game in the men's division, Commonwealth Health Center stunned the Joeten Motor Jets, 13-6.

CHC improved to a 5-10 record and handed the Jets their fifth loss in 17 games. The Jets and CHC were also supposed to meet on Feb. 27.

An eight-run bottom of the second sparked by centerfielder Ben Higgins' two-run triple allowed CHC to take control of the game, leading at 11-2, after two complete innings.

The Jets never regained their bearings from thereon.

Higgins and leftfielder Lefty Shiro both went 2-for-4 at bat for CHC and had three RBIs each. Second baseman Bradley Ngiwaki was 3-for-4, scored two runs and had one RBI. CHC went 18-for-35 at the plate for a batting average of .514.

Leftfielder Ben Taisacan was perfect at bat for the Jets, hitting 3-for-3. He nailed three RBIs and had one double. Shortstop Cliff Sillil was 3-for-4, made one double, and recorded two RBIs.

CPA 12, CUC 9

In the last make-up game of the

night, Commonwealth Ports Authority outlasted CUC, 12-9.

CPA was behind, 6-7, after three and a half innings when a six-run bottom of the fourth put the team in the lead, 12-7.

CUC moved within three, 9-12, as it shut out CPA in the fifth and sixth inning, while scoring two runs at the top of the sixth. But CPA kept the win with a double play at the top of the seventh.

Kel Kalen led off for CUC at the top of the last and advanced on a Jack Diaz error. CPA shortstop Mel Manahane caught a fly ball from second batter Tyrone Kileleman for the first out. Third batter and CUC catcher Roy Laniyo stepped up to the plate, but was beaten to first base. Diaz then threw the ball to second baseman Donald Pangelinan, who tagged Kalen out, ending the game in CPA's favor.

CNMI

From Page 28

Macau made its first goal a few minutes later and had four more to end the first half with a 5-1 lead. Macau nailed another one in the second half to foil the CNMI strikers' upset bid.

Loken said although they did not score in the second half, the team played better, especially on defense.

"We played more as a team in the second half and we

were aggressive on defense. Overall, we learned a lot from our first game against Macau. Hopefully, these will help us in our next game [tomorrow] against Guam," Loken said.

"There's more at stake in our game against Guam, as this is sort of a rivalry between two teams in Micronesia. We will do our best, play solid defense, and see what happens next," he added.

Loken is hoping that his teammates will remember how the CNMI almost won over Guam during the EAFF quali-

fier in 2007 on Saipan to boost the Commonwealth's confidence when they face the hosts tomorrow at 4pm. The CNMI strikers lost by only a goal, 2-3, in the EAFF tournament two years ago.

Kambe, who also coached Guam from 2003 to 2005, said the CNMI will be facing a different team in Guam and the Commonwealth strikers will need more aggressiveness on defense to keep pace with the host.

"It will not be easy, but it will be an interesting match and I am sure CNMI players will play

with a lot of pride, as they want to prove something against Guam," Kambe said.

Guam was playing Mongolia in the second match of Day 1 yesterday, but results of the match were unavailable at press time.

The preliminary competition will be a round-robin event with the team that earns the most points after three games moving to the semifinal round, which will be played in August in Taiwan. A victory is equivalent to three points, one for a draw, and none for a loss.

EAFF

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"The Oceania Football Confederation will be having a meeting this June and in that meeting, we will be seeking the 'permission or release' of Northern Mariana Islands from their zone, so NMIFA can proceed with its application for

AFC membership," Ogura said. "We are positive that OFC will grant permission to the CNMI," he added.

But Ogura reminded NMIFA that the association has a lot of things to do to gain membership to AFC.

"First is to have various football clubs. There should be teams in various age groups and men's and women's adults divisions. Having

regular programs for schools are also factors that will affect NMIFA's application for membership to AFC. Trained coaches and referees are needed, too. Lastly, you need facilities," Ogura said.

Ogura, who is a senior vice president for Japan Football Association and an executive committee member of AFC and FIFA, said when all these things are put into place, he is confident NMIFA will

be granted membership to AFC.

Ogura left Saipan Monday morning to watch the East Asian Football Championship 2010 Preliminary Competition in Guam. The tournament will run from March 11 to 15 at the Leo Palace Resort with the CNMI, Guam, Mongolia, and Macau battling for a slot to EAFF's semifinal round, which will be played this August in Taiwan.

CABRERA

From Page 28

tom sixth before losing the game on groundouts.

Hustlers 11, Falcons 0

UMDA Hustlers roared to another overwhelming win against the Falcons, 11-0, their fourth in as many games.

Four Hustlers scored two runs—Dean Santos in the first and fourth, Bonnie Babauta in the third and fourth, Ray Saralu in the first and sixth, and K.J. Deleon Guerrero in the

fourth and fifth.

Peyton Lizama and Miko Gabionza also reached home plate in the fourth and fifth, respectively.

Athletics 12, Survivors 6

Century Athletics blasted the Survivors with seven runs in the bottom of the second inning en route to a 12-6.

Justin Ligua, Davin Ada, Fermin Borja, and Gregory Muna reached home plate twice, while Beltran Muna, Max Castro, Primo Sasamoto, and Joaquin Vilagomez added one run each for

the A's second win in four starts.

Jerry Kintol and Brel Yobech led the Survivors with two runs each both in the fourth and sixth, while Truman Shiro and Caleb Takao had one each in the loss, their third after four games.

Braves 10, IT&E, 0

Tanapag Braves kept their momentum going as they blanked IT&E, 11-0, via the 10-run mercy rule last Saturday.

The Braves needed four full innings to post their second straight win after dropping their first two games to the Red Sox, 1-9, and Ol' Aces, 0-5.

O.J. Lifofoi displayed his brilliance on the mound by not allowing any batter to reach first base. He struck out nine of the 12 IT&E players at bat.

On offense, the Braves scored five in the bottom of the second inning from Bradley Lieto, Ian Rogolofoi, Roy Tudela, Lifofoi, Hubert San Nicolas, and Aaron Irog.

The Braves added four more runs in the third from Kent Kalen Jr., Lieto, Tudela, and Lifofoi.

Second baseman Jay Kalen capped the win with a run in the fourth.

Marathon will have a cut-off time of six hours and 30 minutes to ensure that all races will finish by 2pm.

For more information about the qualifying tournament, contact Barnes at kurtproa@yahoo.com or call 235-5853, or Elias Rangamar at 664-2502.

NMA

From Page 28

picturesque courses in the world," she added.

The 5k event will replace the 7.5k walk.

"The addition of the Gold

Coast Bulletin 5km Challenge will be a great introduction for those runners who may not feel ready to tackle a 10k race just yet. The 5k is also a good distance for the walkers, many of whom are participating for the health and fitness benefits, as well as to enjoy the atmosphere

of the Gold Coast Airport Marathon with friends or colleagues," Hart said.

Other events set for the Gold Coast meet are the wheelchair half marathon, Southern Cross University 10km Run, and the 2.25k and 4k junior races.

The full Gold Coast Airport

GOLF BRIEFS

SGA holds March Ace Sunday

The March Ace of the Month will be at stake when Saipan Golfers Association holds a tournament this Sunday at Kingfisher Golf Links. Check-in time is at 8am, while tee off is at 9:04am. Winner of this weekend's tournament will earn a slot to the SGA Ace of Aces Tournament in December, joining early qualifiers Tony Deleon Guerrero (January) and Joe Rosario (February). Deleon Guerrero and Rosario had identical net scores of 76 during the February Ace tournament held last month at the Marianas Country Club, but the latter won in the scorecard tiebreak on hole No. 5. Rosario double bogeyed the par-4 hole, while Deleon Guerrero tripled. For more information about Sunday's tournament, contact Martin Sablan at 483-6278, Larry Guerrero at 287-1052, or Mariano Fajardo at 483-2549. (PR)

Fil-Taga February Ace set this Sunday

The Fil-Taga Golfers Association will hold its March Ace of the Month Tournament this Sunday, March 15, at the Marianas Golf and Country Club in Marpi. According to tournament director Nestor Siruelo, show time is set at 11am with tee-off time scheduled 30 minutes later at 11:30am. Es-

tablished in 1993, Fil-Taga's tournaments operate under a computer-controlled handicap system that creates parity among players in the A and B Flights. A Fil-Taga Ace of the Month champion is crowned monthly. Regular tournaments are scheduled once a month, normally every third Sunday. Green fees are in the \$35 to \$40 price range for most tournaments. (PR)

CWGA March Ace this Saturday

The CNMI Women's Golf Association's March Ace of the Month Tournament will be held this Saturday, March 14, at the Laolao Bay Golf Resort west course. According to the club's secretary Lorraine Babauta, show time is set at 11:30am and tee time is scheduled an hour later at 12:30pm. Established in March 2007, CWGA is a non-profit organization founded to promote, encourage, and introduce women to the sport of golf in the CNMI. The organization intends to accomplish the following: 1. Promote civic and community interest in golf; 2. Establish and encourage competition and good sportsmanship; 3. Promote and provide social functions of the members and their families; 4. Promote youth golf activities; and 5. To do any or all things necessary and proper to accomplish its purpose and intention. (PR)

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Boston	49	15	.766	-
Philadelphia	30	31	.492	17.5
New Jersey	28	35	.444	20.5
New York	26	37	.413	22.5
Toronto	23	41	.359	26.0

Central Division

x-Cleveland	50	13	.794	-
Detroit	32	30	.516	17.5
Chicago	29	35	.453	21.5
Milwaukee	30	37	.448	22.0
Indiana	28	38	.424	23.5

Southeast Division

Orlando	46	17	.730	-
Atlanta	36	28	.562	10.5
Miami	34	29	.540	12.0
Charlotte	28	36	.438	18.5
Washington	15	49	.234	31.5

WESTERN CONFERENCE Southwest Division

San Antonio	43	20	.683	-
Houston	42	23	.646	2.0
New Orleans	39	23	.629	3.5
Dallas	39	25	.609	4.5
Memphis	16	46	.258	26.5

Northwest Division

Utah	41	23	.641	-
Portland	40	23	.635	0.5
Denver	40	25	.615	1.5
Minnesota	18	45	.286	22.5
Oklahoma City	18	46	.281	23.0

Pacific Division

LA Lakers	50	13	.794	-
Phoenix	34	30	.531	16.5
Golden State	21	42	.333	29.0
LA Clippers	15	49	.234	35.5
Sacramento	14	50	.219	36.5

x-Clinched Playoff Spot; y-Division Champ; z-Clinched Home Court

Yesterday's Games

Utah 112, Indiana 100
San Antonio 100, Charlotte 86
Dallas 122, Phoenix 117
New York 120, Milwaukee 112
Oklahoma City 99, Sacramento 98
Cleveland 83, LA Clippers 83

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOCAL SCORES

BUDWEISER SOFTBALL STANDINGS

Men's Division

DCCA	17	0
Freedom Air	13	3
Beach Boys	13	3
CPA	11	4
Docomo	13	4
Joeten Motor Jets	12	5
No Zone	11	5
Legislature	10	7
POI	8	7
DLNR	7	10
CRM/DEQ	6	8
P&S	6	9
CHC	5	10
PSS	5	11
PIC	4	10
CUC	4	10
Customs	4	12
Mayors	4	12
Law & Order	3	11
Hopwood	0	15

Women's Division

NMC	10	2
Finance	6	4
CUC	6	5
DCCA	5	7
CHC	1	10

17th Marianas Cup Beach Volleyball Festival

Photos by NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.



Men's MVP Shoji Wakiya is flanked by Russ Quinn and Jon Cramer during the awards ceremony of the 17th Marianas Cup Beach Volleyball Festival at the Seaside Grill of Pacific Islands Club.



U.S. pro Paul Baxter, right, became the only three-time champion of the Marianas Cup. His amateur partner Hugo Dooner, on the other hand, won his second title after his triumph in 1994. Aside from the champions trophies, the duo split the top purse of \$4,000.



Tyce Mister holds the Olympic gold medal of his partner Phil Dalhausser. They settled for second place after losing twice to the tandem of Paul Baxter and Hugo Dooner.



Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association president Laurie Peterka presents a certificate of appreciation and a one-night stay at the Hyatt Regency Saipan to Kanae Quinn for her efforts in organizing this year's event.



Runners-up Federica Tonon and Daniela Gitteli of Italy are joined by Russ Quinn and Jon Cramer.



Chris Nelson and Jeff Carlucci settled for fourth place and won \$600.



The main organizers smile to the camera—Russ Quinn, Laurie Peterka, Jon Cramer, and Kanae Quinn.



Women's MVP Yoko Miki flashes the victory sign and her prize watch.



Japanese amateur partners Yoko Miki and Chie Iwana, the back-to-back champions, hold their trophies and \$3,800 prize.



Japanese amateur players Shoji Wakiya and Shinya Inoue receive their medal and \$1,200 in cash for finishing third.



NMC caps regular season with win

Northern Marianas College played its last game in the regular season of the women's division of the 2008-2009 Inter-Government/Business Slow-pitch Softball League and whipped Commonwealth Utilities Corp., 8-1, Tuesday at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

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Saipan Tribune Sports

Netherlands topples Dominican Republic

Stunned twice by a pesky Netherlands team, the Dominican Republic is done at the World Baseball Classic.

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28 THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2009

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

CNMI scores first goal in EAFF preliminary

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The CNMI Men's Football Team recorded the first goal in the East Asian Football Championship 2010 Preliminary Competition before bowing to Macau, 1-6, yesterday at the Leo Palace Resort in Guam.

Joe Miller scored in the fifth minute of the first half on an assist from Peter Houk. The play started from Lucas Knecht chasing a Macau striker. Team captain Peter Loken entered the picture and stole the ball. He then kicked it toward the sideline to Houk, who then found Miller in the middle for a powerful left foot kick.

"It was a quick goal. We never expected to score early. That goal stunned not only Macau, but our players, too. It was a good start for us," CNMI coach Sugao Kambe said in telephone interview with the *Saipan Tribune*.

See CNMI on Page 26



Members of the CNMI Men's Football Team pose for a group photo during the opening ceremony for the East Asian Football Championship 2010 Preliminary Competition yesterday at Leo Palace Resort in Guam.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

EAFF president Ogura visits N. Marianas

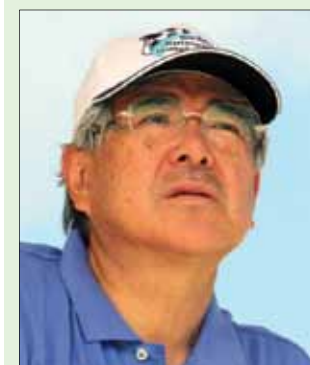
By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

East Asian Football Federation president Junji Ogura of Japan made a brief visit to Saipan over the weekend and gave an update on Northern Mariana Islands Football Association's application for membership in the Asian Football Confederation.

Ogura arrived on Saipan Saturday afternoon and on Sunday morning NMIFA president Jerry Tan accompanied the EAFF president to the Oleai Sports Complex Field.

"We are honored to have Mr. Ogura on Saipan. This visit gave us a chance to show him how we do things here for the development of football," Tan said.

"We also take this opportunity to thank him for giving us technical and financial assis-



Ogura

tance. He has been very helpful in bringing a new coach for our nationals teams, providing seminars for referees and coaches, and donating equipment to the association," the NMIFA head added.

While watching the CNMI Men's Football Team in its last training session on Saipan before leaving for Guam, Tan also briefed Ogura about the Oleai field and other facilities NMIFA is using for its tournaments.

Tan explained all these facilities are not owned by NMIFA, thus it will be very important for the association to have its own fields through the help of EAFF, AFC, and FIFA in the future.

Ogura in an interview with *Saipan Tribune* said they may have some good news for NMIFA this summer as far as the association's application for membership to AFC is concerned.

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Cabrera hits 2 homers as Dragons beat JPO



NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

Century Athletics' Zachary Sasamoto, who switched with Davin Ada from pitcher to shortstop, dives and successfully tags Survivors' Gayvan Uchau, who was attempting to steal second in the sixth inning.

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER



Centerfielder Jonathan Cabrera hit two solo homeruns as the Dragons repulsed JPO Enforcers, 13-9, on Saturday in the Major Division of the 2009 Saipan Little League Baseball Association at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Pangelinan Ballfield.

The Dragons broke away from a 3-3 tie after two full innings with seven runs in the top of third,

including Cabrera's first homer of the game.

The Enforcer's own centerfielder retaliated with an inside-the-park homerun in the bottom of the third, while Justin Reyes advanced to first on a base on ball on the way to their fifth run via passed balls.

The Dragons made two more runs in the fourth from Jonathan Villagomez and Franco Bodoc and Cabrera homered anew in the fifth for a commanding 13-5 lead and never looked back.

The Enforcers did manage four runs in the bot-

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NMA to hold qualifier for Oceania half marathon

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER



Northern Marianas Athletic will be holding a qualifying tournament to select two long distance runners who will represent the CNMI to the half marathon competition in the 31st Annual Gold Coast Airport Marathon in Australia.

NMA president Kurt Barnes said the qualifier will be held simultaneously with the CNMI National Championships on May 2. The race course and start time will be announced later.

The half marathon event in Gold Coast will take place on July 5.

The two CNMI athletes who will qualify for the tournament Down Under will get an all-expense paid trip to Australia, courtesy of the Oceania Athletics Association.

Besides the half and full marathon, the 31st Annual

Gold Coast Airport Marathon will also feature four other events and changes on the marathon course.

Queensland Events Gold Coast general manager Cameron Hart said changes will add additional appeal to participants and the community.

The full 42.195k marathon course, which starts at the Southport Broadwater Parklands, will stretch all the way to a southern turnaround point at Burleigh Heads this year, rather than the previous turnaround at Miami.

"This will add another scenic and flat section to the course at the southern end taking in one of the most beautiful and well known beaches in the world, Burleigh Heads," Hart told the OAA website.

"The marathon course will take participants into another beautiful part of the Gold Coast and will continue its standing as one of the most

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Barnes